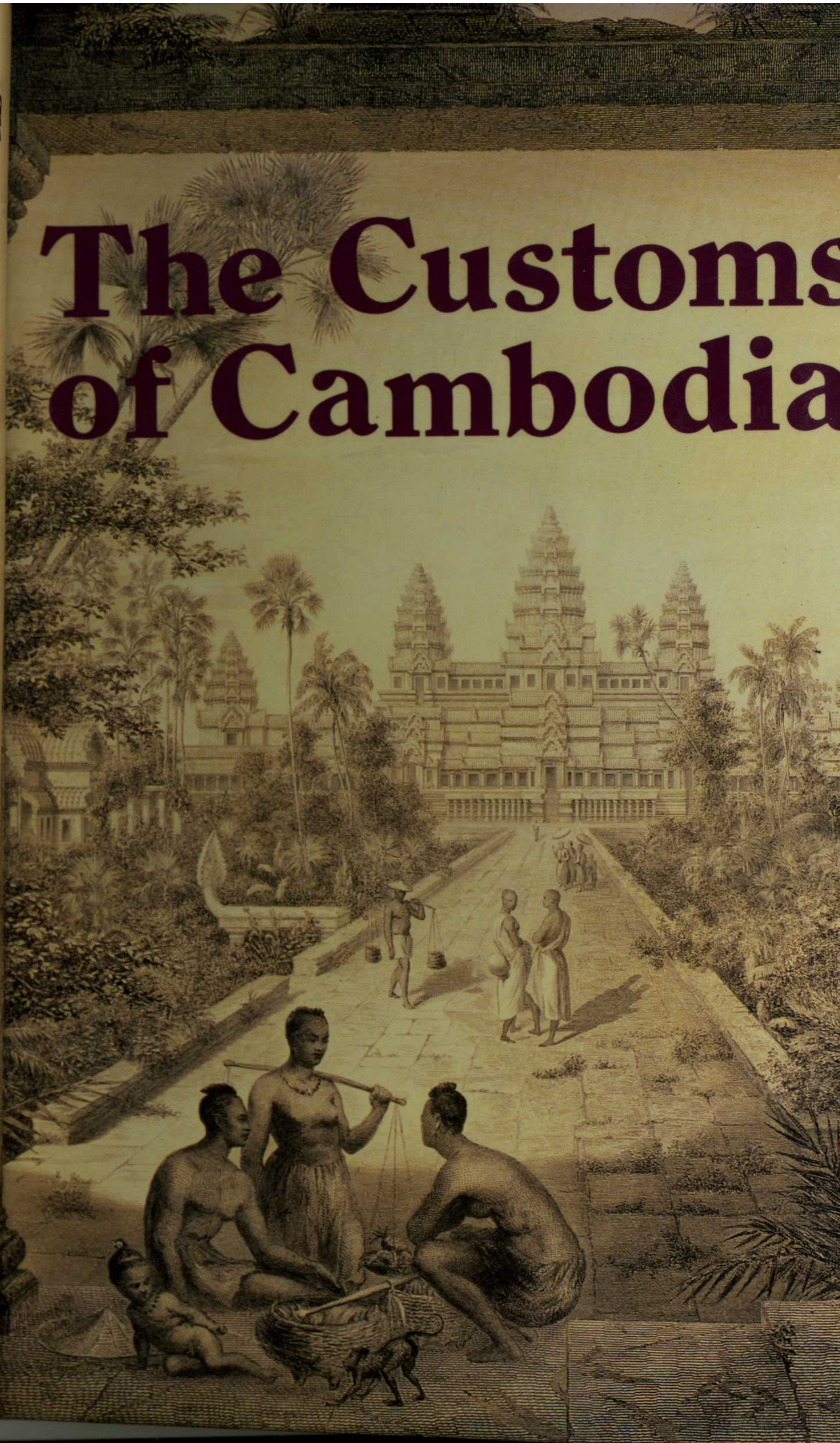
CHOU TA-KUAN spent a year in Cambodia from 1296 to 1297 as part of a Chinese diplomatic mission sent by Timur Khan, the grandson and successor of Kublai Khan, to the court of Indravarman III (reigned 1295-1308). The Khmer empire, though past its zenith, was still powerful and wealthy. Chou wrote his account some time before 1312 and it is the only detailed contemporary account of Angkor to come down to us.

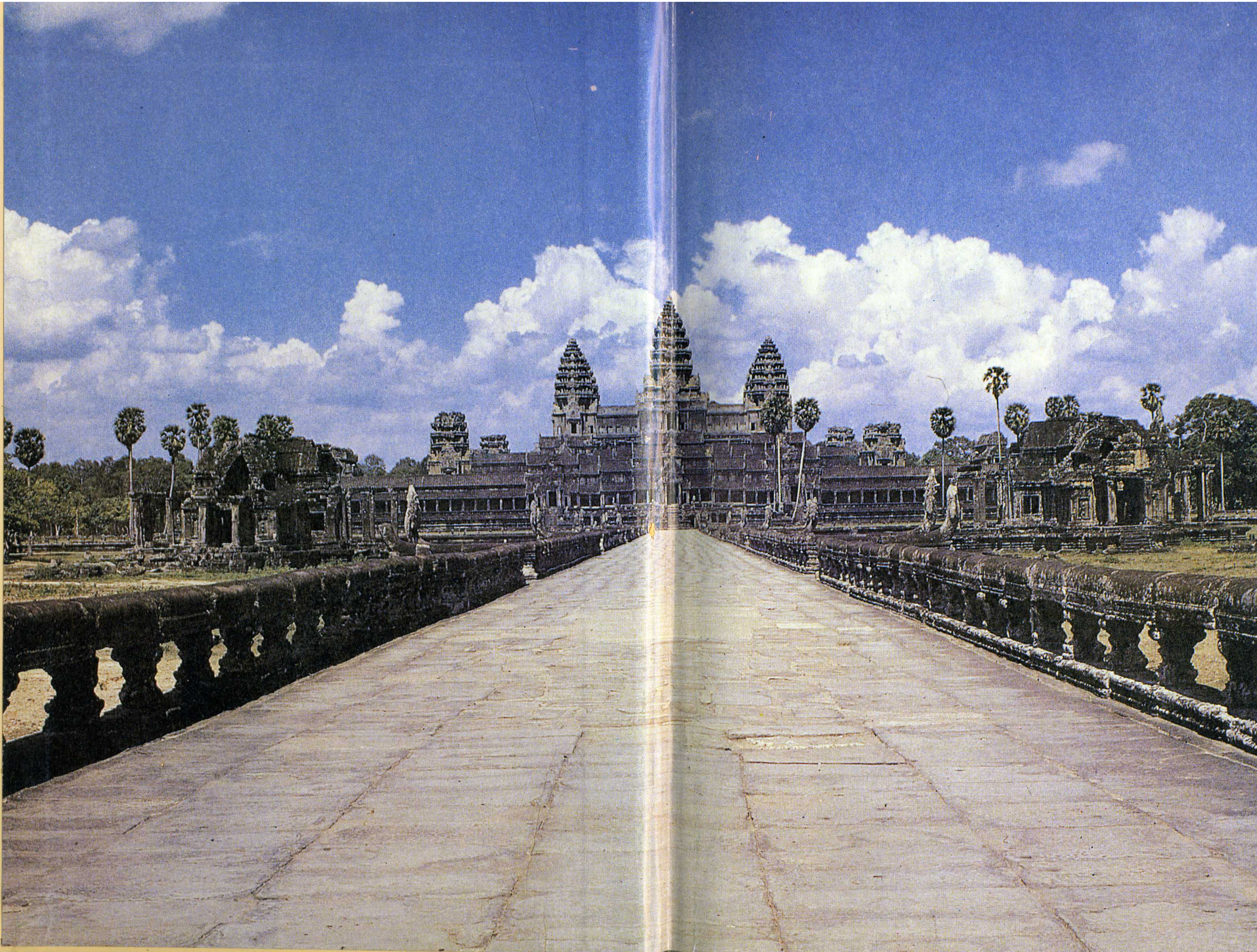
The text was translated from Chinese into French by Paul Pelliot and published in 1902. An English translation appeared in Bangkok in 1967 but has long been out of print, as has also the Siam Society's 1987 edition.

This new edition is particularly timely now that Angkor can again be visited and Chou's descriptions of the walled city, people, dwellings and daily life retain all their vividness and colour across the centuries. In addition to Delaporte's splendid lithographs this second edition has 30 illustrations in colour, most of them previously unpublished.

The Customs of Cambodia by **Chou Ta-Kuan**

The Customs of Cambodia





Main facade of Angkor Wat

THE CUSTOMS OF CAMBODIA

眞臘風土記

by

CHOU TA-KUAN

(Zhou Daguan)

周達觀

Translated into English from the French version by Paul Pelliot of Chou's Chinese original by J. Gilman d'Arcy Paul

THE SIAM SOCIETY
BANGKOK
SECOND EDITION
1992
ISBN 974-8359-68-9

Bantrey Srei male divinity

CONTENTS

Note to the second edition
Avant-propos
Historical note
Foreword by Prince Wan Waithayakorn
Introduction by Paul Pelliot
Chou Ta-Kuan's Preface

The Walled City
Cambodian Dwellings
Clothing
Functionaries
The Three Religious Groups
The Natives
Childbirth
Maidenhood
Slaves
Language
Aborigines
Writing
New Year and Seasons
Justice
Sickness and Leprosy
The Dead
Agriculture
The Configuration of the Land
Products
Trade
Chinese Goods
Trees and Flowers
Birds
Animals
Vegetables
Fish and Reptiles
Fermented Drinks
Salt, Vinegar and Soy

Silkworms and the Mulberry Tree 58
Utensils 59
Chariots and Palanquins 61
Boats and Oars 62
The Provinces 63
The Villages 65
Collecting the Gall 66
A Prodigy 67
Bathing 69
Immigrants 69
The Army 71
The Sovereign Comes Forth 72

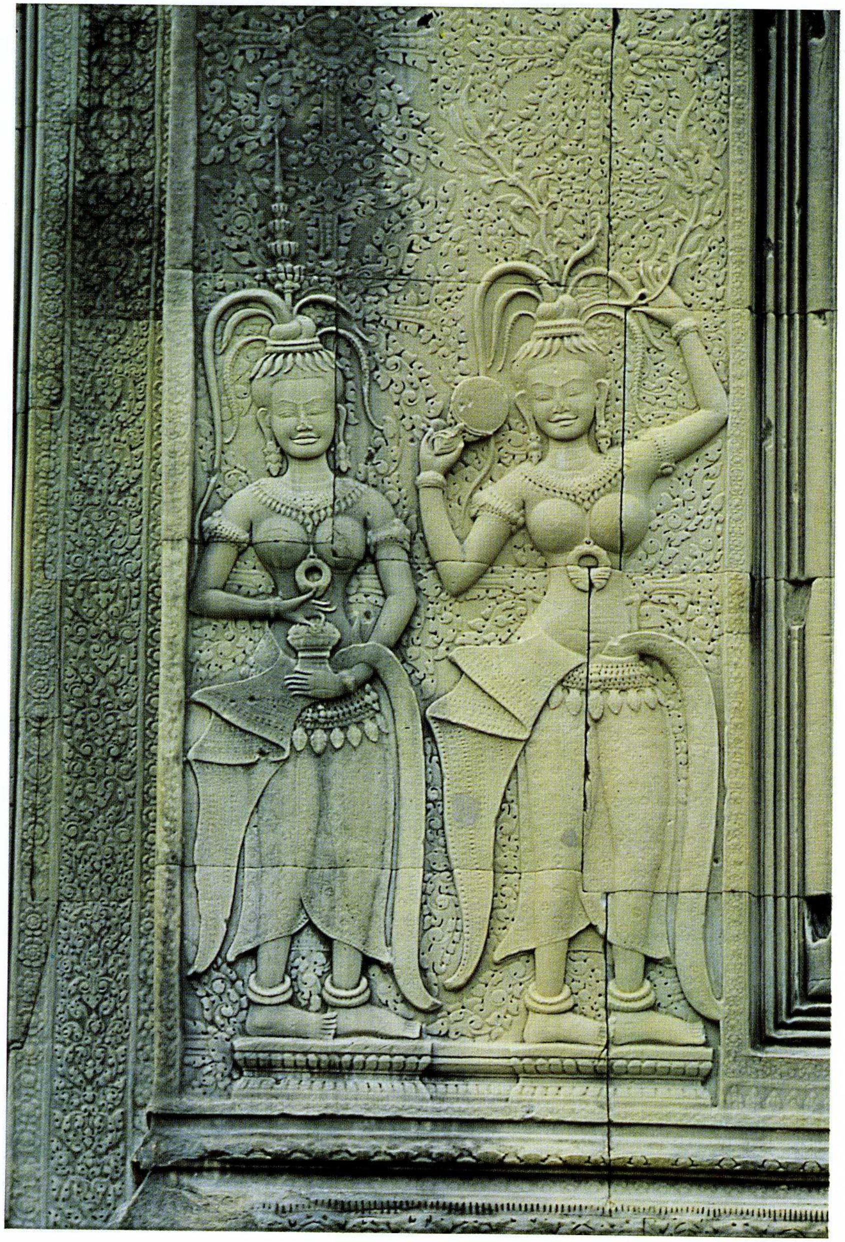
NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The Siam Society edition of Chou Ta-Kuan's lively account of th customs of late thirteenth century Cambodia was published in 1987. With it compelling lithographs of Angkor by L. Delaporte from the *Atlas du voyag d' exploration en Indochine* published by Hachette in 1873, it rapidly prove to be a popular book and has been out of print for some time.

To all intents and purposes Cambodia in general, and Angkor i particular, has been closed to visitors for the past two decades. The recer reopening of some parts of the country to tourism, including Angkor, ha triggered off a new surge of interest in what many would claim is a wonde more wonderful than many of the celebrated seven of the ancient world.

The moment is propitious for the Siam Society to make this histori document available again. In this second edition the text of the first editio has been retained in its entirety but many new photographs have bee included. For these the Siam Society is indebted to Mr. Decho Buranabur pot, Honorary Photographer to the Society (on pp. vi, x, xii, xvi, 1, 4, 6, 8, 1 14, 24, 26, 36, 38, 44, 46, 54, 56, 60, 64 and 68), and to Mr. Peter Roger Council member and current Chairman of the Publications Committee (on p xiv, 22, 28, 50, 52 and 70).

Bangkok, May 1992



Angkor Wat detail, apsara

AVANT - PROPOS

Twenty years ago the Social Science Association Press of Bangkok produced an English translation of the NOTES ON THE CUSTOMS OF CAMBODIA by Zhou Daguan (Chou Ta-Kuan). This was made possible by a grant from Mr Alexander B. Griswold of the Breezewood Foundation, a friend of whom, Mr J. Gilman d'Arcy Paul, did the translation from the French of Paul Pelliot. Pelliot's text, which appeared in the *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient* in 1902, was itself a translation from the Chinese of Chou Ta-Kuan, who produced, as Pelliot pointed out in his own preface, some time in the years before 1312 and after his return from a year's stay in Cambodia from 1296 to 1297, the only account of Angkor at the height of its splendour.

For some years this fascinating volume has been unavailable, and the Social Science Association Press no longer exists. The Siam Society has therefore reproduced, with permission, the entire text, and would like to thank Mr Griswold for his consent. The original edition contained a foreword by the late Kromamun Naradhip Bongsprabandh, H.R.H. Prince Wan Waithayakorn, a former President of the Siam Society as well as President of the Social Science Association of Thailand, and this is reproduced here. It is appropriate that the two other persons closely associated with the original edition, Mr Griswold and Mr Sulak Srivaraksa, the former editor of the Social Science Association of Thailand, are equally closely associated with the Siam Society; Mr Griswold is an Honorary Vice-President and generous patron of many years standing, and Mr Sulak has been a Council member for eighteen years and is currently Honorary Editor of the *Journal of the Siam Society*.

Thanks must also be expressed to H.S.H. Prince Subhadradis Diskul, another former President of the Siam Society, who in his capacity as Chairman of the James Thompson Foundation made available to the Society a generous grant to allow for republication.

Lastly the Society would like to record its gratitude to Monsieur Michel Brunet, cultural attaché at the French Embassy in Bangkok and a former resident of Cambodia, for making available some of his coloured slides of Angkor which are reproduced here.

Publications Committee
THE SIAM SOCIETY
Bangkok

January 1987

Angkor Wat detail, apsara

HISTORICAL NOTE

The builder of Angkor Wat, dedicated to the cult of Vishnu, was Suryavarman II, who reigned from 1113 to 1150 and was the most powerful king in the country's history, extending the empire considerably. He was the first Angkorean king since Jayavarman II (reigned ?802-850), the founder of the empire, to send missions to China.

Jayavarman VII (reigned 1181-?1219) raised the cult of the deva-raja to its peak and considered himself as a Bodhisattva, Avolekitesvara. The king was an intermediary between the gods and men on earth. He built more than any other Cambodian king (it is calculated in fact that he built more than all the others put together) and succeeded in exhausting his country and its population. His chief monuments are the Bayon and the city of Angkor Thom.

In the thirteenth century Jayavarman VIII (reigned 1243-1295) reestablished Brahmin dominance at court, though the people seen to have been more taken with the asceticism of Theravada Buddhism; he ignored Chinese demands that he pay homage and went so far as to imprison Kublai Khan's envoy.

He was overthrown by his son-in-law, Indravarman III (reigned 1295-1308), who had only been on the throne a year when Chou Ta-Kuan's embassy came to Angkor, sent by Timur Khan, the grandson and successor of Kublai. The embassy appears to have been well received, though there is some doubt as to whether in fact Cambodia ever did pay homage.

The Khmer empire had passed its zenith; the Thais had attacked it from the west in the twelfth century, and the Chams from the east. The Siamese attacks increased with the consolidation of Ayutthaya, and the Thais occupied Angkor for a time in the middle of the thirteenth century, sacking it a century later so extensively that it was abandoned.

Chou Ta-Kuan describes the last days of the Khmer empire, when Theravada Buddhism was dominant, the cult of the deva-raja for all intents and purposes abandoned, and the king personally manifested himself in the streets. It may well have been a more relaxed society than that under either Suryavarman II or Jayavarman VII, and the construction of no great monuments was undertaken. Megalomania had given way to humanity, though some of the customs described by Chou Ta-Kuan, who though a fair reporter was not without his Middle Kingdom prejudices, seem appropriately outlandish.

Angkor Wat, rising levels

FOREWORD

by the late
H.R.H. Prince Wan Waithayakorn, Krommamun Naradhip Bongsprabandh

The Editor of the University Press of the Social Science Association of Thailand shows his usual spirit of enterprise in securing matters of interest for publication.

In the present case, it is an important document of historical interest: *Notes on the Customs of Cambodia* by Chou Ta-Kuan, translated from the French version of Paul Pelliot by J. Gilman d'Arcy Paul.

The translator is a friend of Mr. A.B. Griswold, a well-known student of Thai art and Thai culture, who has sent us a sum of money on behalf of the Breezewood Foundation for the publication of the document in question.

In the name of the Social Science Association of Thailand, I wish to extend our grateful thanks to Mr. Griswold, Mr. D'Arcy Paul and the Breezewood Foundation for enabling us to publish an English version of this historical document.

It is to be noted that Chou Ta-Kuan wrote of Angkor at the height of its prosperity and yet we find that Buddhist monks in Cambodia were called *ch'u ku* เจ้ากู, a Thai name, an evidence of Thai culture.

Naradhip

President
Social Science Association of Thailand
1967

Banteay Srei female divinity

INTRODUCTION

The only description of Angkor at the height of its splendor to be found in Chou Ta-Kuan's *Notes on the Customs of Cambodi*

This chronicler (surnamed Ts'ao-t'ing i-min) was native of Yun chia, in the Province of Chekiang. In 1296-1297 he was assigned to du with a Chinese embassy which passed nearly a year in Cambodia. Retur ing to China, he wrote his account – presumably at once, but certain before 1312. He was still living in 1346. Shortly before the fall of t Mongol dynasty (1368) his *Notes* were incorporated in a lengthy comp lation of one hundred chapters (largely composed of excerpts) ascrib to one T'ao Tsung-i and called the *Shuo fu.* This *Shuo fu,* however, not the same as the standard edition of one hundred and twenty chapte published in 1646-1647. In this edition the *Notes* are taken bodily, sa for a short omission, from the 1544 text in the *Ku chin shuo hai.* This te has been followed, directly or indirectly, in half-a-dozen later editio of the *Notes* which have been in use up to now. Nevertheless, sever copies in manuscript, often faulty or fragmentary, survive from t original *Shuo fu;* one of them was recently published by the Commerc Press of Shanghai. This text is on the whole identical with the *Ku ch shuo hai,* which seems to have been copied from the *Shuo fu* itself. It of great importance, therefore, to have for the first time a text not deriv from the edition of 1544.

The *Shuo fu* contains few complete works. For this reaso although the *Notes,* as we have them, form a coherent whole, one justified in asking whether the text has not been condensed. This was t firm opinion of a bibliophile of the mid-seventeenth century, Ch'i Ts'eng, who, referring to a manuscript in his possession, wrote: "Th volume was taken from a manuscript of the Yüan. The edition of t *Ku chin shuo hai* abounds in contradictions, mistakes, and omissio Six or seven-tenths of the original are lacking and one gets a scanty id of the book itself."

Paul Pell
19

CHOU TA - KUAN'S PREFACE

To the Chinese the country called Cambodia is known as Ch'en-la or Ch'an-la and to its inhabitants as Kan-po-chih (Kamboja)*. The present dynasty, drawing on Tibetan religious lore, calls the country Kan-p'u-chih, a name phonetically allied to Kan-po-chih.

The traveller, embarking at Wen-chou (in Chekiang) and sailing south-southwest, will pass the ports of our prefectures of Fukien, Kwang-tung, and those beyond, and crossing the Sea of the Seven Islands (Taya Islands) and the Sea of Annam will arrive at Champa (Quinhon). Then, leaving Champa with a following wind, he will arrive in about a fortnight at Chen-p'u (the region of Cap St. Jacques or Baria) where the frontiers of Cambodia begin. Next, leaving Chen-p'u in a southwesterly direction, he will cross the Sea of K'un-lun (Poulo-Condor) and enter the delta (of the Mékong). There are several dozen mouths, but only the fourth one allows free passage; all the other are choked with sandbars, which cannot be crossed by large vessels. Whatever way one looks nothing is to be seen but tall canes, old trees, yellow sands, and pale reeds; at first glance it is impossible to orient oneself, and even the sailors hold it difficult to find one's way into the right channel. From this point, sailing northward if the current permits, one reaches in a fortnight a country called Ch'a-nan (Kompong Chnang) which is one of the provinces of Cambodia. At Ch'a-nan one transfers to a smaller boat and in a little more than ten days, still with a favourable current, one passes the half-way point of the Buddha's Village (probably the modern Pôrsát). Crossing now the Sea of Fresh Water, one reaches a place called Kan-p'ang (= Kompong, ''landing-stage'') which is less than six miles from the Walled City. According to the *Description of the Barbarians (Chu-fan chih,* published in 1225) the kingdom extends for over 1750 miles. Travelling north from this point Champa can be reached in fifteen days of overland travel. Travelling southwest, one reaches Siam in fifteen days. Travelling south one finds oneself in ten days at P'an-yu, and to the east lies the ocean.

For long years this country has enjoyed commercial relations with us. When the Holy Dynasty (Mongol dynasty) received its august mandate from Heaven and extended its power over all four seas, and when the Generalissimo Sôtu had set up (in 1281) his government in Champa, the Son of Heaven sent forth to Cambodia a Centurion bearing the Standard of the Tiger and a Chiliarch bearing a golden tablet, travelling

together, but both of them were taken prisoner and were never heard of again.

In the sixth moon of the year *i-wei* of the *yuan-ch'eng* epoch (July 14 to August 11, 1295) the holy Son of Heaven sent an ambassador to recall these people to their sense of duty and designated me as his travelling campanion. On the second moon of following year *ping-chen* (March 5 to April 3, 1296) we left Ming-chou (Ning-po) and on the twentieth (March 24, 1296) put out to sea from the estuary of Wen-chou. On the fifteenth day of the third moon (April 18, 1296) we arrived at Champa. From now on, halfway through our journey, we were harrassed by contrary winds, which delayed our arrival until autumn, at the seventh moon (August 1 to 29, 1296). After receiving homage and accomplishing the purpose of our embassy, we returned to our ship on the sixth moon of the year *ting-yu* of the period *ta-te* (June 21 to July 20, 1297). On the twelfth day of the eighth moon (August 30, 1297) we finally dropped anchor at Sau-ming (Ning-p'o). Certain it is that in so short a time the customs and peculiarities of this country could not have been revealed to us in all their details; however, we were at least in a position to outline its principal characteristics.

*Modern place-names, dates, etc. are given in brackets.

Angkor Thom gateway

The Walled City

The wall of the city is some five miles in circumference. It has five gates, each with double portals. Two gates pierce the eastern side; the other sides have one gate only. Outside the wall stretches a great moat, across which access to the city is given by massive causeways. Flanking the causeways on each side are fifty-four divinities resembling war-lords in stone, huge and terrifying. All five gates are similar. The parapets of the causeways are of solid stone, carved to represent nine-headed serpents. The fifty-four divinities grasp the serpents with their hands, seemingly to prevent their escape. Above each gate are grouped five gigantic heads of Buddha, four of them facing the four cardinal points of the compass, the fifth head, brilliant with gold, holds a central position. On each side of the gates are elephants, carved in stone.

The walls, about twelve feet in height, are built entirely of cut stone blocks, set close and firm, with no crevices for weeds to grow in, and no crenellations. On the battlements sago palms have been planted at irregular intervals. Let into the wall here and there are casemates. The inner side of the wall resembles a glacis, more than sixty feet wide, at the top of which are huge gates, closed at night and swung open in the morning. Dogs are forbidden entrance, as are criminals whose toes have been cut off.

The wall forms a perfect square, with a stone tower at each face. At the (magical) center of the Kingdom (i.e. the central point of the city) rises a Golden Tower (Bayon) flanked by more than twenty lesser towers and several hundred stone chambers. On the eastern side is a golden bridge guarded by two lions of gold, one on each side, with eight golden Buddhas spaced along the stone chambers. North of the Golden Tower, at a distance of about two hundred yards, rises the Tower of Bronze (Baphuon), higher even than the Golden Tower: a truly astonishing spectacle, with more than ten chambers at its base. A quarter of a mile further north is the residence of the King. Rising above his private apartments is another tower of gold. These are the monuments which have caused merchants from overseas to speak so often of "Cambodia the rich and noble."

About two hundred yards beyond the South Gate rises a mighty stone tower which, it is said, was built in a single night by Lu Pan (a legendary Chinese artisan). Lu Pan's tomb (Angkor Wat) is four hundred yards distant from the South Gate. Two and a half miles in circumference, it contains several hundred stone rooms.

The Eastern Lake lies some two and a half miles east of the Walled City. The distance round it is nearly twenty-five miles. At its center stands a stone tower, with dozens of stone chambers. In it lies a recumbent bronze Buddha, from whose navel flows a steady stream of water.

The Northern Lake lies one and a quarter miles to the north of the Walled City. At its centre stands a square tower of gold (Neak Péan) with several dozen stone rooms. If you are looking for gold lions, gold Buddhas, bronze elephants, bronze oxen, bronze horses, here is where you will find them.

Cock Fighting

Cambodian Dwellings

The Royal Palace, as well as official buildings and homes of the nobles, all face the east. The Royal Palace stands to the north of the Golden Tower and the Bridge of Gold; starting from the gate its circumference is nearly one and a half miles. The tiles of the central dwelling are of lead; other parts of the palace are covered with pottery tiles, yellow in color. Lintels and columns, all decorated with carved or painted Buddhas, are immense. The roofs, too, are impressive. Long colonnades and open corridors stretch away, interlaced in harmonious relation. In the chamber where the sovereign attends to affairs of state, there is a golden window, with mirrors disposed on square columns to the right and left of the window-trim, forty or so in number. Below the window is a frieze of elephants. I have heard it said that within the palace are many marvellous sights, but these are so strictly guarded that I had no chance to see them.

Out of the palace rises a golden tower, to the top of which the ruler ascends nightly to sleep. It is common belief that in the tower dwells a genie, formed like a serpent with nine heads, which is Lord of the entire kingdom. Every night this genie appears in the shape of a woman, with whom the sovereign couples. Not even the wives of the King may enter here. At the second watch the King comes forth and is then free to sleep with his wives and his concubines. Should the genie fail to appear for a single night, it is a sign that the King's death is at hand. If, on the other hand, the King should fail to keep his tryst, disaster is sure to follow.

The dwellings of the princes and holders of high office are wholly different in size and design from those of the people. The family temple and the main hall are covered with tiles; all the outlying buildings are thatched with straw. The rank of every official determines the size of his house.

Straw thatch covers the dwellings of the commoners, not one of whom would dare place the smallest bit of tile on his roof. In this class, too, wealth determines the size of the house, but no one would venture to vie with the nobility.

Domestic Scene

Clothing

Every man or woman, from the sovereign down, knots the hair and leaves the shoulders bare. Round the waist they wear a small strip of cloth, over which a larger piece is drawn when they leave their houses. Many rules, based on rank, govern the choice of materials. Among the fabrics worn by the sovereign, are some, very rich and sheer, which are valued at three or four ounces of gold. Although certain fabrics are woven in Cambodia, many are imported from Siam and Champa, preference being given to the Indian weaving for its skill and delicacy.

Only the ruler may wear fabrics woven in an all-over pattern. On his head he carries a diadem much like those worn by the *vajradhara;* at times he lays aside the diadem and weaves into his hair a garland of fragrant blossoms reminding one of jasmine. Round his neck he wears some three pounds of great pearls. On wrists, ankles, and fingers he wears bracelets and rings of gold, all set with cat's-eyes. His feet are bare. The soles of his feet and the palms of his hands are stained red with henna. On leaving the palace he wears a golden sword.

Only the womenfolk of the commoners are permitted to stain the soles of their feet and the palms of their hands. This is forbidden to men. The wearing of fabrics patterned with recurring groups of flowers is permitted to high officers and princes. Ordinary mandarins are allowed to wear only material with two groups of flowers, and women of the people may do likewise. Should a Chinese, newly arrived, wear cloth with two groups of flowers, it cannot be charged against him, for he is "An-ting pa-sha"' (min-ting bhasa), "a man who does not know the rules."

Functionaries

In this country there is a hierarchy of ministers, generals, astronomers, and other functionaries; beneath these come all sorts of small employees, differing only in name from our own. For the most part princes are selected as office-holders; if not of princely rank they offer their daughters as royal concubines.

When functionaries go out in public, their insignia and the number of their attendants are regulated according to rank. The highest dignitaries use palanquins with golden shafts and four parasols with handles of gold; those next in rank have a palanquin with golden shafts and two gold-handled parasols; then come those entitled to one palanquin with gold shafts and one gold-handled parasol; and finally those with only a gold-handled parasol. Further down the line come those permitted only a silver-handled parasol, and there are others who use a palanquin with silver shafts. Functionaries entitled to gold parasols are called *pa-ting (mrateng?)* or *an-ting (am teng);* those with silver parasols are called *ssu-la-ti (śresthin?).* All parasols are made of red Chinese taffeta, with flounces falling to the ground. Water-proof parasols are all made of oiled green taffeta, and the flounces are short.

Central tower and upper courtyard of Angkor Wat

The Three Religious Groups

There are three religious groups: the *pan-ch'i*, or men of learning; the bonzes, or Buddhist monks, called *ch'u-ku* (Siamese: jao-gu = "my lord"); and the Taoists, or *pa-ssu-wei*.

As for the *pan-ch'i* (*pandita,* in this passage Brahmins), I am unable to say what inherited creed lies back of them, as they have no school or seminary for training. It is equally difficult to find out what are their sacred books. I have only observed that they dress like men of the people, except that all their lives they wear round the neck a white thread that marks them as men of learning. The *pan-ch'i* often rise to high position.

The Buddhist monks *(ch'u-ku)* shave the head, wear yellow robes, bare the right shoulder, knot a strip of yellow cloth round the waist and go barefoot. Their temples, which are often roofed with tiles, contain only one statue, closely resembling the Buddha Sakyamuni, which is called Po-lai (= Prah). Moulded from clay, it is painted in various colors and draped with red. On the other hand, the Buddhas on the towers are of bronze. There are no bells, no drums, no cymbals, no banners. The food of the bonzes is universally fish or meat, which is also set as an offering before the Buddhas; but no wine may be drunk. They content themselves with one meal a day, which is partaken of at the home of a patron, no cooking being done in the monasteries. The numerous holy books that they scan are made of strips of palm-leaf, neatly bound together. These strips are covered with black characters, but as no brush or ink is used, their manner of writing is a mystery. To certain monks is given the right to use palanquins with golden shafts and parasols with gold or silver handles. These men are consulted by the King in matters of serious import. There are no Buddhist nuns.

The Taoists *(pa-ssu-wei)* are clothed like men of the people, save that on their heads they wear a white or red hood, like the *ku-ku* of the Mongol women, but worn lower. They, too, have monasteries, but smaller than the Buddhist temples, for Taoists do not attain the prosperity of the Buddhist sectarians. They worship nothing but a block of stone (linga) similar to that on the altar of the God of the Earth in China. Again, I do not know on what their conduct is patterned. There are no Taoist nuns. Taoists are permitted to roof their temples with tiles. They do not share the food of others, nor do they eat in public. They allow themselves no wine. I have never been present at readings of their holy books, nor observed their acquiring merit through acts of kindness.

Scenes of daily life

Children of the laity who attend their schools become novices of the bonzes who teach them. When they have grown up, they return to lay life. I was unable to make detailed investigation of all this.

The Natives

The customs common to all the southern barbarians are found throughout Cambodia, whose inhabitants are coarse people, ugly and deeply sunburned. This is true not only of those living in the remote fastnesses of the sea islands but of the dwellers in centres of population. It applies equally to the ladies of the court and to the womenfolk of the noble houses, whose pallor, like that of jade, comes from being shuttered away from the fierce sunlight.

Generally speaking, the women, like the men, wear only a strip of cloth, bound round the waist, showing bare breasts of milky whiteness. Their hair is fastened up in a knot, and they go barefoot, even the wives of the King, who are five in number, one of whom dwells in the central palace and one at each of the four cardinal points. As for the concubines and palace girls, I have heard it said that there are from three to five thousand of these, separated into various categories. They are seldom seen beyond the palace gates.

Every time I was admitted to the palace for an audience with the King, he came forward with his chief wife and took his seat in the embrasure of the golden window in the main audience hall. The ladies of the court were drawn up on both sides of the veranda below the window, changing places now and then to get a better look at us, and thus giving me a good chance to see them. When a beautiful girl is born into a family, no time is lost in sending her to the palace.

In a lower category are the women who do errands for the palace; of these, called *ch'en-chia-lan* (= Sanskrit śrṅghara) there are at least two thousand, all married, with homes throughout the city. The hair of the forehead is shaved high after the manner of the northern people and a vermilion mark is made here, as well as on each temple. This is the distinctive sign of the *ch'en-chia-lan*. Only these women are given entry to the palace, which is forbidden to all of lesser rank. They move in an unbroken stream through the streets in front of and behind the palace.

Women of the people knot their hair, but there is no sign of hairpins or comb, or any other adornment of the head. On their arms they wear gold bracelets and rings of gold on their fingers: the palace women

and the court ladies also observe this fashion. Men and women alike are anointed with perfumes compounded of sandalwood, musk, and other essences.

Worship of the Buddha is universal.

In the market place groups of ten or more catamites are to be seen every day, making efforts to catch the attention of the Chinese in the hope of rich presents. A revolting, unworthy custom, this!

Childbirth

Once a Cambodian woman's child is born, she immediately makes a poultice of hot rice and salt and applies it to her private parts. This is taken off in twenty-four hours, thus preventing any untoward after-effects and causing an astringency which seems to renew the young mother's virginity. When told of this for the first time, my credulity was sorely taxed. However, in the house where I lodged a girl gave birth to a child, and I was able to observe beyond peradventure that the next day she was up carrying the baby in her arms and going with him to bathe in the river. This seems truly amazing!

Everyone with whom I talked said that the Cambodian women are highly sexed. One or two days after giving birth to a child they are ready for intercourse: if a husband is not responsive he will be discarded. When a husband is called away on matters of business, they endure his absence for a while; but if he is gone as much as ten days, the wife is apt to say, "I am no ghost; how can I be expected to sleep alone?" Though their sexual impulses are very strong, it is said some of them remain faithful.

The Cambodian women age very rapidly, doubtless because of too early marriage and motherhood. When twenty or thirty years old they resemble Chinese women of forty or fifty.

A gateway to Angkor Thom

Maidenhood in Cambodia

When a daughter is born to a Cambodian family, it is customary for the parents to express for her the wish: "May the future bring thee a hundred, a thousand husbands!" Daughters of rich parents, from seven to nine years of age (or eleven, in the case of poor people) are handed over to a Buddhist or Taoist priest for deflowering, a ceremony known as *chen-t'an*. Each year the proper authorities choose a day of the month corresponding to the fourth Chinese moon and let this be known throughout the country. Every family with a daughter ripe for *chen-t'an* then notifies the authorities, who send a taper bearing on its length a certain mark. At nightfall on the proper day the candle is lighted, and when it burns down to the mark the moment for *chen-t'an* has come.

A fortnight before this the family will have chosen a priest – Buddhist or Taoist according to their place of residence. The services of the higher class of priests are all engaged in advance by the families of wealth or social prominence, while the poor have no time for making distinctions. The former load the priests with presents of wine, rice, fabrics, silk, areca-nuts, silver plate, in value often reaching one hundred piculs, or two or three hundred ounces in Chinese money. Presents from people of lesser station may be worth thirty or forty piculs, according to the size of the family fortunes. If poor girls find themselves approaching their eleventh birthday without getting together sufficient money to pay the priest, it often happens that generous people of means help with a contribution, which they call "acquiring merit." A priest is not allowed to perform the ceremony for more than one girl a year, and once he has accepted his fee he cannot pledge himself to initiate a second one.

The night of the ceremony a great feast, with music, is prepared. In front of the girl's home a platform is erected on which are placed figurines of animals and persons, sometimes ten or more in number, often less. Nothing of this sort is expected of the poor. Following an ancient tradition these figurines remain in place for a week. Next, a procession with palanquins, parasols, and music sets out to fetch the priest. Two pavilions hung with brilliantly coloured silks have been set up; in one of these is seated the priest, the maiden in the other. Words are exchanged between the two, but they can scarely be heard, so deafening is the music, for on such occasions it is lawful to shatter the peace of the night. I have been told that at a given moment the priest enters the maiden's pavilion and deflowers her with his hand, dropping the first fruits into a vessel of wine. It is said that the father and mother, the relations and neighbors,

stain their foreheads with this wine, or even taste it. Some also say that the priest has intercourse with the girl; others deny this. As Chinese are not allowed to witness these proceedings, the exact truth is hard to learn.

At daybreak the priest is escorted back home with palanquins, parasols, and music, after which it is customary to buy the girl back from the priest with presents of silk and other fabrics; otherwise she becomes his property forever and cannot marry. What I saw of these proceedings took place on the sixth night of the fourth moon of the year *ting-yu,* of the period *ta-te* (April 28, 1297). Before the ceremony the father, the mother and the daughter had always slept in the same room; afterwards, the room was closed to the young woman, who went wherever she pleased, with no constraint.

When it comes to weddings it is the custom to make presents of textiles; this obligation is lightly assumed, however, as bride and groom have often had pre-nuptial intercourse. In this there is seen no cause for shame, or even surprise. The night of the *chen-t'an* more than ten families often perform the ceremony at the same time, processions of Buddhists and Taoists meeting and crossing in the streets. Everywhere there is the sound of music.

Slaves

Wild men from the hills can be bought to serve as slaves. Families of wealth may own more than one hundred; those of lesser means content themselves with ten or twenty; only the very poor have none. These savages are captured in the wild mountainous regions, and are of a wholly separate race called *Chuang* (brigands). After being brought to town, they dare not venture out of their owners' houses. So looked down on are these wretches that when, in the course of a dispute, a Cambodian is called "Chuang" by his adversary, dark hatred strikes to the marrow of his bones.

If young and strong, slaves may be worth a hundred pieces of cloth; when old and feeble, they can be had for thirty or forty pieces. They are permitted to lie down or be seated only beneath the floor of the house. To perform their tasks they may go upstairs, but only after they have knelt, bowed to the ground, and joined their hands in reverence. Their master they call *pa-t'o (pàtau,* father*)*; the mistress is addressed as *mi (me,* mother*)*. If they have committed some misdemeanor and are beaten for it, they bow their heads and take the blows without daring to make the least movement.

Male and female slaves have intercourse, but it would be unheard of for the master of a house to have sexual relations with them. If by chance a Chinese, arriving in the country after long abstinence, should assuage his appetite with one of the women slaves, and the fact become known to her owner, the latter would refuse to be seated in the presence of a man who had defiled himself with a savage. Should one of the slaves be got with child by a foreigner sojourning in the house, the master would take no pains to learn who was the father, since the mother would have no civil status. Indeed, the master would profit by any offspring she might have, for these would be slaves to the end of their days. If a slave should run away and be captured, a blue mark would be tattooed on his face; moreover, an iron collar would be fitted to his neck, or shackles to his arms or legs.

Angkor Wat

Language

Cambodia has a language of its own. Though the languages of the people of Champa and of Siam seem to us to have similarities of sound, they cannot understand each other. The number one is *mei (muy);* two is *pieh (pir);* three, *pei (bei);* four, *pan (buon);* five, *po-lan (pram);* six, *po-lan-mie (pram muy);* seven, *po-lan-pieh (pram pir);* eight, *po-lan-pei-(pram bei);* nine, *po-lan-pan (pram buon);* ten, *ta (dap);* father, *pa-t'o (patau);* paternal uncle, also *pa-t'o;* mother, *mi (mi or mé);* paternal or maternal aunt, likewise *mi,* which is applied also to women friends of respectable age; older brother, *pang (ban);* older sister, also *pang;* younger brother, *pow-wen (phaon);* maternal uncle, *ch'i-lai (khlai);* and *ch'i-lai* for the husband of the paternal aunt.

For the most part the order of words as we understand it is reversed. For instance, where we say, "That man is Chang San's younger brother," they would say, "*pu-wen* Chang san" (younger brother of Chang San); for "That man is Li Ssu's maternal uncle," they say, "*ch'i-lai* Li Ssu" (maternal uncle of Li Ssu). For another example, China they call "Pei-shih;" a mandarin, *pa-ting;* a man of learning, *pan-chi'i (pandit).* However, for "a Chinese mandarin" they do not say, "*pen-shih pan-ch'i,*" but "*pan-ch'i pei-shih.*" And so on.

Mandarins have their own style of speech for deliberations; men of letters speak with the careful elaboration of their kind; Buddhists and Taoists have their priestly jargon; and each city or village its own dialect. It is exactly the same as in China.

Water Wheel

Aborigines

There are two categories of aborigines : the first comprises those who understand the language of the country; these are sold in the towns as slaves. In the second category are those who refuse to submit to civilization and are not familiar with its language. They have no houses, but wander about in the mountains, followed by their families, carrying clay jars on their heads. Should they meet a wild animal, they kill it with bow or lance, strike fire from flint, cook the animal and eat it communally, afterwards resuming their wanderings. Their nature is savage and their poisons are extremely dangerous. Even in their own gatherings murder is common. In regions closer to civilization there are those who devote themselves to growing cardamom and tree cotton and to weaving. Their fabrics are very coarse, however, with fantastic patterns.

Dancers

Writing in Cambodia

For ordinary correspondence, as well as official documents, deer-skin or similar parchment is used, which is dyed black. The parchment is cut by the scribe in sizes to suit his needs. A sort of powder resembling Chinese chalk is molded into small sticks called *so* (cf. modern Siamese: *ŝo, dinsò,* pencil), which are used to inscribe the parchment with lasting characters. When finished with writing, they place the *so* behind the ear. The nature of the characters makes it possible to recognize the writer. Rubbed with something moist, they disappear. Generally speaking, the characters are closely similar to those of the Uighurs. All documents are read from left to right, and not from above to below. I have heard it said at Asän-qaya that their letters are pronounced exactly like those of the Mongols, with only a few variations. No seals are used. In drawing up petitions, people often have recourse to professional scribes.

Angkor, apsaras

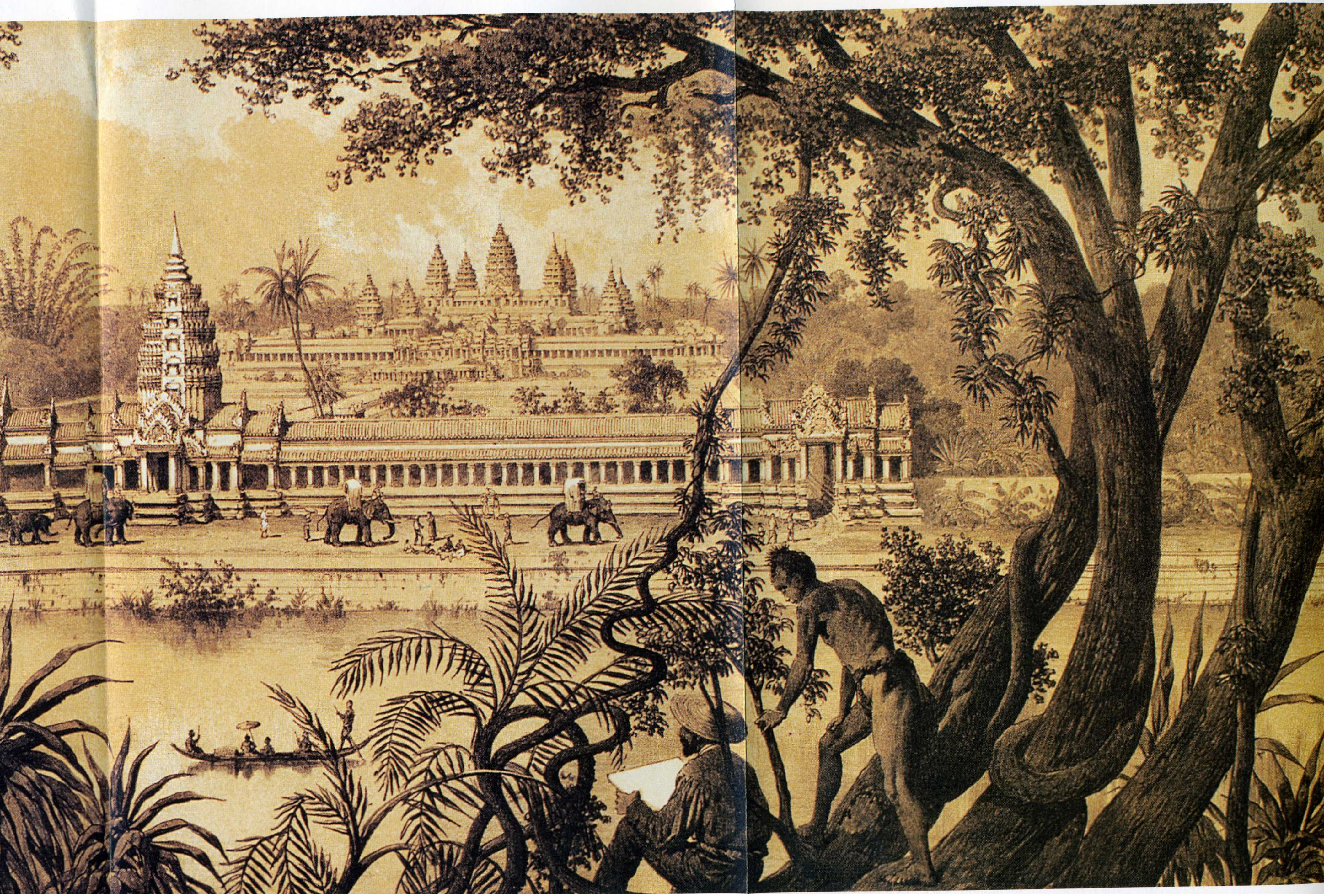
New Year and the Seasons in Cambodia

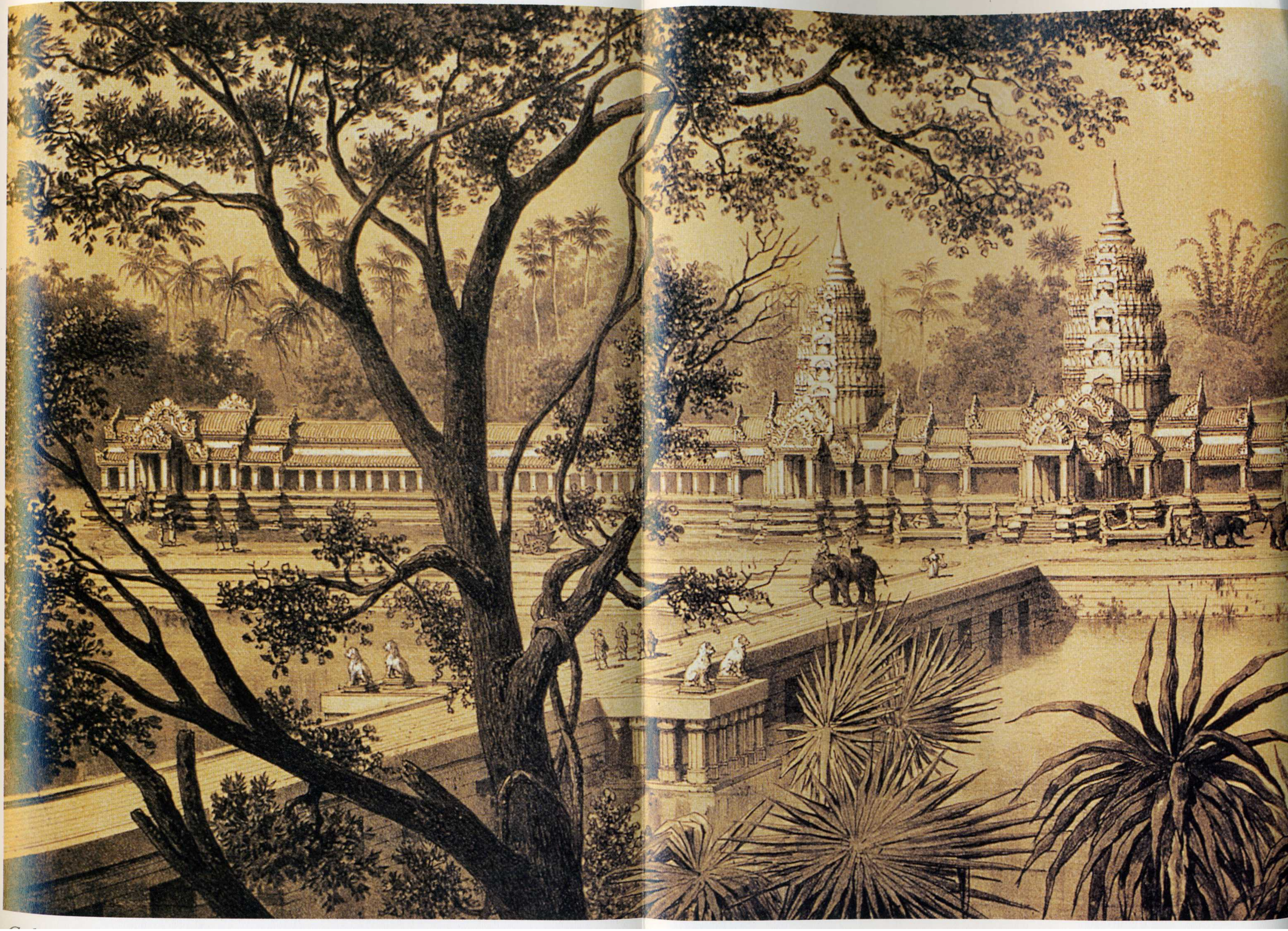
In Cambodia the New Year begins with the tenth Chinese moon, and is called *chia-te* (Sanskrit : Kārttika). In front of the royal palace a great platform is erected, sufficient to hold more than a thousand persons, and decorated from end to end with lanterns and flowers. Opposite this, some hundred and twenty feet distant, rises a lofty scaffold, put together of light pieces of wood, shaped like the scaffolds used in building stupas, and towering to a height of one hundred and twenty feet. Every night from three to six of these structures arise. Rockets and firecrackers are placed on top of these - all this at great expense to the provinces and the noble families. As night comes on, the King is besought to take part in the spectacle. The rockets are fired, and the crackers touched off. The rockets can be seen at a distance of thirteen kilometres: the fire-crackers, large as swivel-guns, shake the whole city with their explosions. Mandarins and nobles are put to considerable expense to provide torches and areca-nuts. Foreign ambassadors are also invited by the King to enjoy the spectacle, which comes to an end after a fortnight.

Every month a festival is held. The fourth month they have ball games. With the ninth month comes the *ya lieh (rap riep)* or census, when the entire population of the kingdom is summoned to the capital and passed in review before the royal palace. With the fifth month comes the ceremony of "bringing water to the Buddhas". Then Buddhas are carried from all over the kingdom, water is procured, and the ruler lends a hand in laving them. The festival of floats marks the sixth month, with the King enthroned on a belvedere to enjoy the spectacle. "The burning of the rice" marks the seventh month. This is the season for harvesting the new rice, which is brought to the South Gate and burned as a sacrifice to the Buddha. Countless women arrive in carts or on elephants to watch this ceremony, but the ruler is not to be seen. The eighth is the month of *ai-lan (räm),* or dancing. Every day actors and musicians are summoned to the royal palace to perform the *ai-lan*. In addition battles are staged between boars and elephants. Foreign ambassadors are invited as guests of the King to these festivities, which last ten days. I am unable to recall the ceremonies appropriate to the remaining months.

In this country, as in our own, there are men who understand astronomy and can calculate the eclipses of the sun and of the moon. However, a system different from ours determines the length of each month. In certain years, they must needs resort to an intercalary month, but this can only be the ninth month – and this I am unable to understand.

Every night is divided into five watches. A cycle consists of seven days, analogous to the Chinese *k'ai-pi chien ch'u*. As these barbarians have no family name nor personal name, and keep no record of the date of their birth, many of them contrive to make a personal name out of the day of the week in which they were born. Two days of the week are feast days, three are undistinguished, and two days are of evil omen. On some days it is auspicious to travel to the east; on others one must go westward. Even the women are able to make these reckonings. The twelve animals of the cycle correspond with those in China, but are named differently. Thus the horse is called *pu-sai* (Khmer, *bhu sèh*); the cock is *man* (Khmer, *man*); the pig is *shih-lu* (Khmer, *cruk*); the ox is *ko* (Khmer, kô); et cetera.





Cambodian Justice

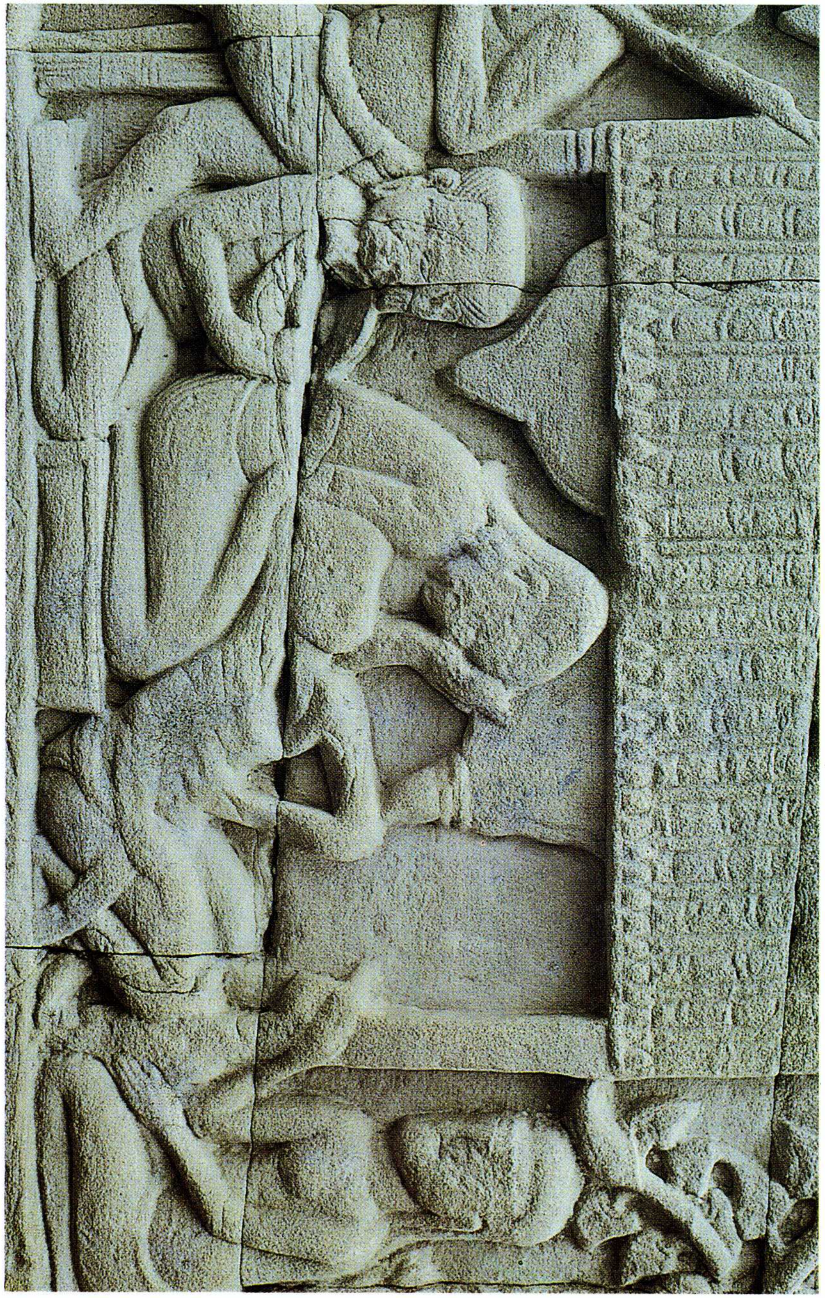
Points of dispute between citizens, however trifling, are taken to the ruler. Unheard of is punishment administered by light or heavy bastinado, and penalties are, so I am told, only of a pecuniary nature. In dealing with cases of great seriousness, recourse is not had to strangulation or beheading; outside the West Gate, however, a ditch is dug into which the criminal is placed, earth and stones are thrown back and heaped high, and all is over.

Lesser crimes are dealt with by cutting off feet or hands, or by amputation of the nose. However, no punishment is prescribed for adultery or gambling. If the husband of an adulterous woman is informed of what is going on, he has the lover's feet squeezed between two splints of wood till the pain grows unendurable and he surrenders all his property as the price for liberation. As with us, there are people who practice swindling.

If someone finds a corpse lying at the door of his house, he has it dragged with ropes to some waste place outside the city. Nothing exists in the nature of a ''complete inquest''.

When a thief is caught red-handed, he may be imprisoned and tortured. Recourse is also had to another curious procedure. If an object is missing, and accusation brought against someone who denies the charge, oil is brought to boil in a kettle and the suspected person forced to plunge his hand into it. If he is truly guilty, the hand is cooked to shreds; if not, skin and bones are unharmed. Such is the amazing way of these barbarians.

Again, take the case of two men who are disputing over some unknown matter. Twelve little stone towers stand in front of the royal palace. Each of the contestants is forced to be seated in one of the towers, with his relatives standing guard over him. They remain imprisoned two, three, or four days. When allowed to emerge, one of them will be found to be suffering some illness – ulcers, or catarrh, or malignant fever. The other man will be in perfect health. Thus is right or wrong determined by what is called ''celestial judgement''. Thus is shown supernatural strength of the God of this country.



Sick person (Bayon)

Sickness and Leprosy

The people of Cambodia often cure themselves of many illnesses by plunging into water and washing the head again and again. Nevertheless, the traveller meets many lepers along the way. Even when these unfortunates sleep and eat among their fellow-countrymen, no protest is made. By some it is said that leprosy is the outcome of climatic conditions. Even one of the sovereigns fell victim to the disease, and so the people do not look on it as a disgrace. It is my humble opinion that as a rule the illness results if one takes a bath immediately after sexual intercourse – a practice which, I am told, is very prevalent here. Nine out of ten cases of dysentery end fatally. As in our country, drugs can be bought in the market; of these, with their strange names, I have no knowledge. There are also sorcerers who practice their arts on the Cambodians. How utterly absurd!

Bayon tower

The Dead

No coffins are used for the dead in Cambodia; they are laid out on straw matting and covered over with cloth. In funerary processions these people, like ourselves, lead off with flags, banners, and music. They also take two platters of fried rice and scatter it by handfuls along the way. They carry the corpse outside the city to some lonely place, abandon it there, and go home after seeing that the vultures, dogs, and other beasts are coming to devour it. If all is over quickly, they say that their father or their mother had acquired merit and was receiving the due reward; if the corpse is not eaten, or only partially eaten, this is ascribed to some misdeed committed by the departed one. There is a slowly increasing number of those resorting to cremation – mostly descendants of Chinese. On the death of a father or mother, the children do not put on mourning, but the sons shave their heads and the daughters cut away a circle of hair, high on the forehead, as large as a *cash*. Thus they show their filial grief. The rulers are buried in the stupas, but I do not know whether their bodies, or only their bones, are so bestowed.

Fruit and vegetable market

Agriculture

Generally speaking, three or four crops a year can be counted on, for the entire Cambodian year resembles the fifth and sixth moons of China, and frost and snow are unknown. In this country it rains half the year; the other half has no rain at all. From the fourth to the ninth moon there is rain every afternoon, and the level of the Great Lake may rise seven to eight fathoms. Large trees go under water, with only the tops showing. People living at the water-side leave for the hills. However, from the tenth moon to the third moon of the following year not a drop of rain falls; the Great Lake is navigable only for the smallest craft, and the depth of the water is only three to five feet. The hills are then forsaken. Farmers who have noted when the rice is ripe and the height to which the water then rises in flood, time their sowing according to these findings. Oxen are not used in cultivation. Cambodian ploughs, sickles, and hoes, while bearing some likeness in principle to ours, are made entirely differently. There is, moreover, a certain kind of land where the rice grows naturally, without sowing. When the water is up one fathom, the rice keeps pace in its growth. This, I think, must be a special variety.

In fertilizing the fields and growing vegetables, no use is made of (human) dung, which they look on as an impure practice. Chinese who travel to this country never mention the use of dung in China, for fear of rousing Cambodian scorn. Two or three families join together in digging a trench, which, when it is full, they cover over and sow to grass, digging another one elsewhere. After visiting the privy they always wash themselves, using only the left hand: the right hand is kept for use at meals. When they see a Chinese cleaning himself with paper at the privy, they jeer at him and indicate their unwillingness to have him enter their homes. Some of the women make water standing up – an utterly ridiculous procedure.

The Configuration of the Land

After crossing the frontier at Chen-p'u, one see everywhere close-grown thickets of scrub forest; the great estuaries of the Mékong cover hundreds of miles; the heavy shade of old trees and trailing rattan-vines forms a luxuriant cover. Cries of birds and animals weave a tissue of sound. Half-way on one's journey the country opens up suddenly, without a sign of trees. As far as the eye can see there is nothing but an abundance of wild millet. Wild buffaloes, by hundreds and by thousands, graze in groups in this region. This is followed by rising ground covered with bamboo, this too stretching for hundreds of miles. Thorns grow from the joints of this bamboo, and the shoots have a bitter taste. The horizon is bounded on all sides by high mountains.

Products of Cambodia

Many rare woods are to be found in the highlands. Unwooded regions are those where elephants and rhinoceros gather and breed. Exotic birds and strange animals abound. The most sought-after products are the feathers of the kingfisher, elephant tusks, rhinoceros horns, and beeswax. More commonplace articles are laka-wood, cardamoms, gamboge, lacquer, and chaulmoogra oil.

The kingfisher is difficult to catch. Deep in the forests are ponds, and in the ponds are fish in search of which the kingfisher hovers over the forest. Hidden under the leaves, the native crouches at the water's edge. In a cage he carries a female kingfisher as lure, and in his hand he holds a little net. Motionless he waits for the bird till it is in reach of his net. Some days he catches three or five; other days none at all.

Dwellers in the remote fastness of the mountains bring out the elephant tusks – two for each dead elephant. It was formerly believed that the elephant grew new tusks each year, but this is not true. Tusks from an elephant freshly killed by spears are the best. Next in quality are those found soon after the animal has died a natural death. Least prized are those found in the mountains years after the elephant died.

Wax made by bees with a thorax as slender as an ant's is found in hollow trees near the villages. The native know how to gather it. Every river boat may be loaded with two or three thousand combs, the largest weighing as much as thirty or forty pounds, the smaller ones eighteen or twenty.

Rhinoceros horns that are light-coloured and veined are most highly regarded, the dark ones less so.

Laka-wood grows in the depth of the forest. The natives go to much trouble to get it for the prized heart of the tree must be extracted from eight or nine inches of surrounding sap-wood. Even the small trees have four or five inches of sap-wood.

Cardamoms are grown in the mountains by the aborigines.

Gamboge is a resin taken from a special tree. The natives score the bark one year in advance, leaving the sap to ooze slowly until harvested the next year.

Lacquer-gum, which grows on the branches of a special tree, has the form of an epiphytic mulberry, and offers great difficulty to the harvester.

Buying in the market (Bayon)

Chaulmoogra oil comes from the seeds of a large tree. The pod resembles that of the cocoa, but is round. It contains several score seeds.

Pepper is occasionally found. It grows twisted round the stems of the rattan, fastening on like a hop vine. Pepper that is fresh and blue-green has the most savour.

Trade

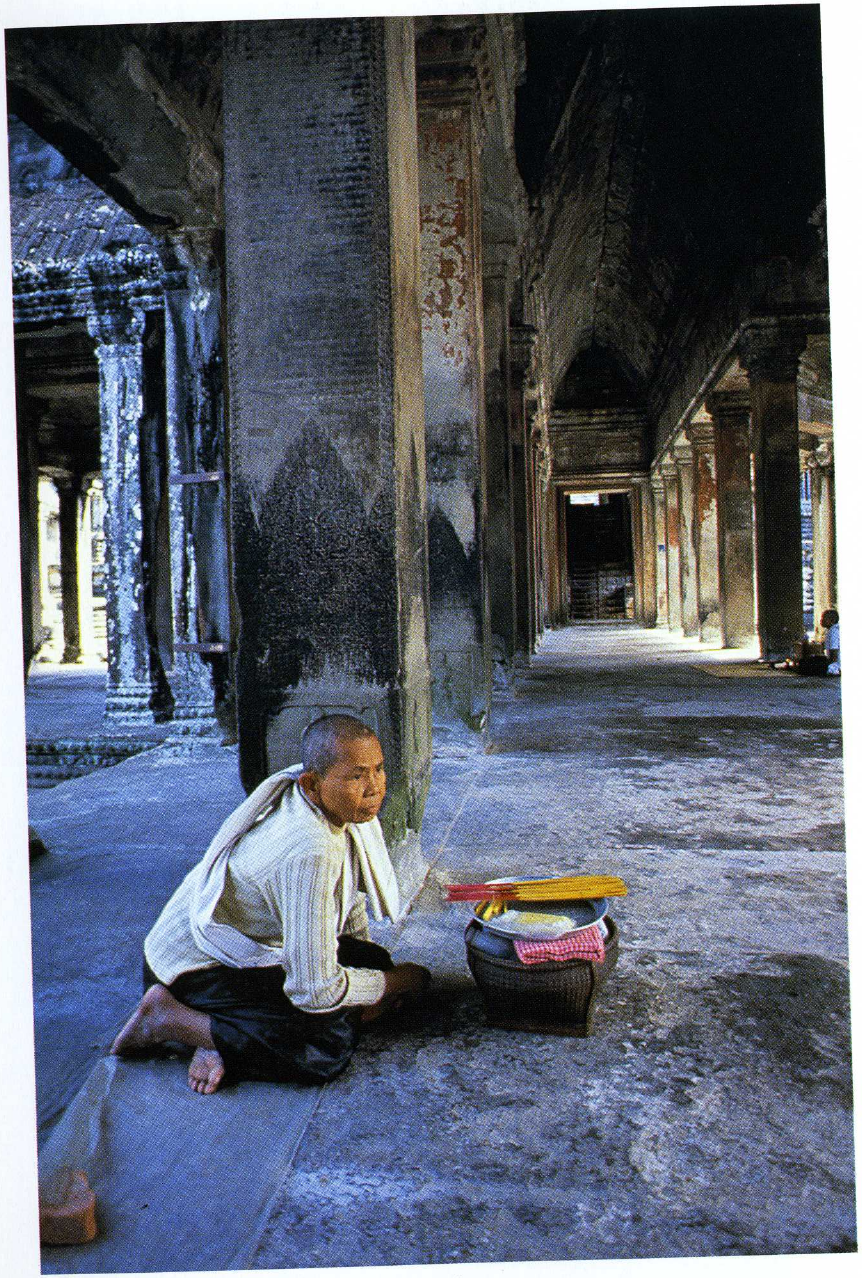
In Cambodia it is the women who take charge of trade. For this reason a Chinese, arriving in the country, loses no time in getting himself a mate, for he will find her commercial instincts a great asset. Market is held every day from six o'clock till noon. There are no shops in which the merchants live; instead, they display their goods on a matting spread upon the ground. Each has his allotted place. I have heard it said that the authorities collect rental for each space. In small transactions barter is carried on with rice, cereals, and Chinese objects; fabrics are next employed, and finally, in big deals, gold or silver is used.

Generally speaking, the people of Cambodia are very simple. On seeing a Chinese they show him timid respect and call him "Buddha", throwing themselves on the ground before him and bowing low. An increasing number, however, are learning to outwit the Chinese and doing harm to a great many of our countrymen who have visited there.

Bayon

Chinese Goods That Are Sought After

No gold or silver is found in this country, to my knowledge; most in demand are Chinese gold and silver; next come figured silk fabrics woven with light or double thread. After these, tin ware from Chen-chou, lacquered trays from Wen-chou, green porcelains (celadon) from Ch'üan-chou, mercury, vermilion, paper, sulphur, saltpetre, sandalwood, angelica-root, musk, linen, *huang-ts'ao* cloth, umbrellas, iron pots, copper trays, fresh-water pearls, tung oil, bamboo nets, basketry, wooden combs, and needles. Commoner, heavier articles are also needed, such as Ming-chou mattings. What the Cambodians most urgently need are beans and wheat, but export of those from China is forbidden.



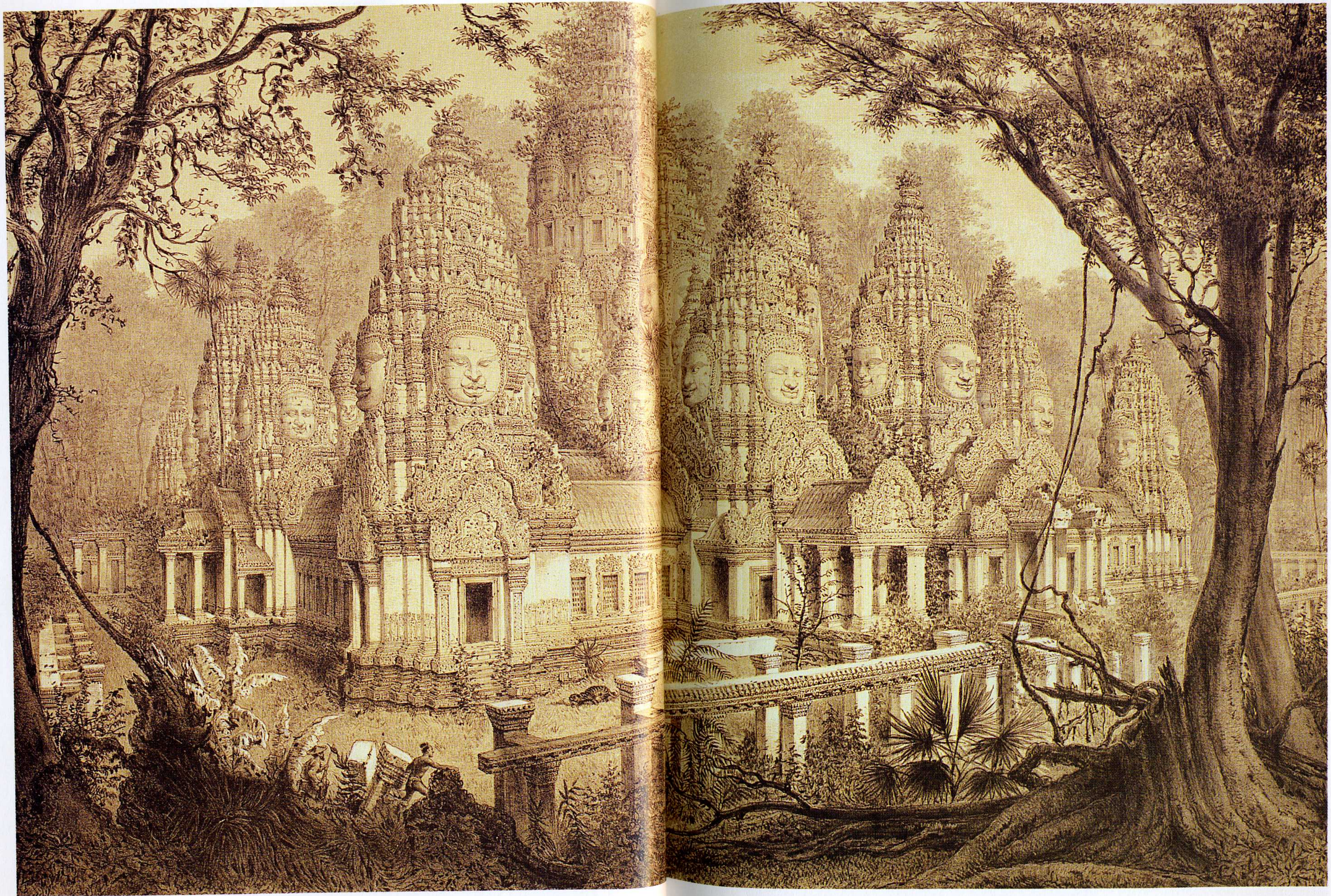
Cambodian woman at Angkor Wat

Trees and Flowers

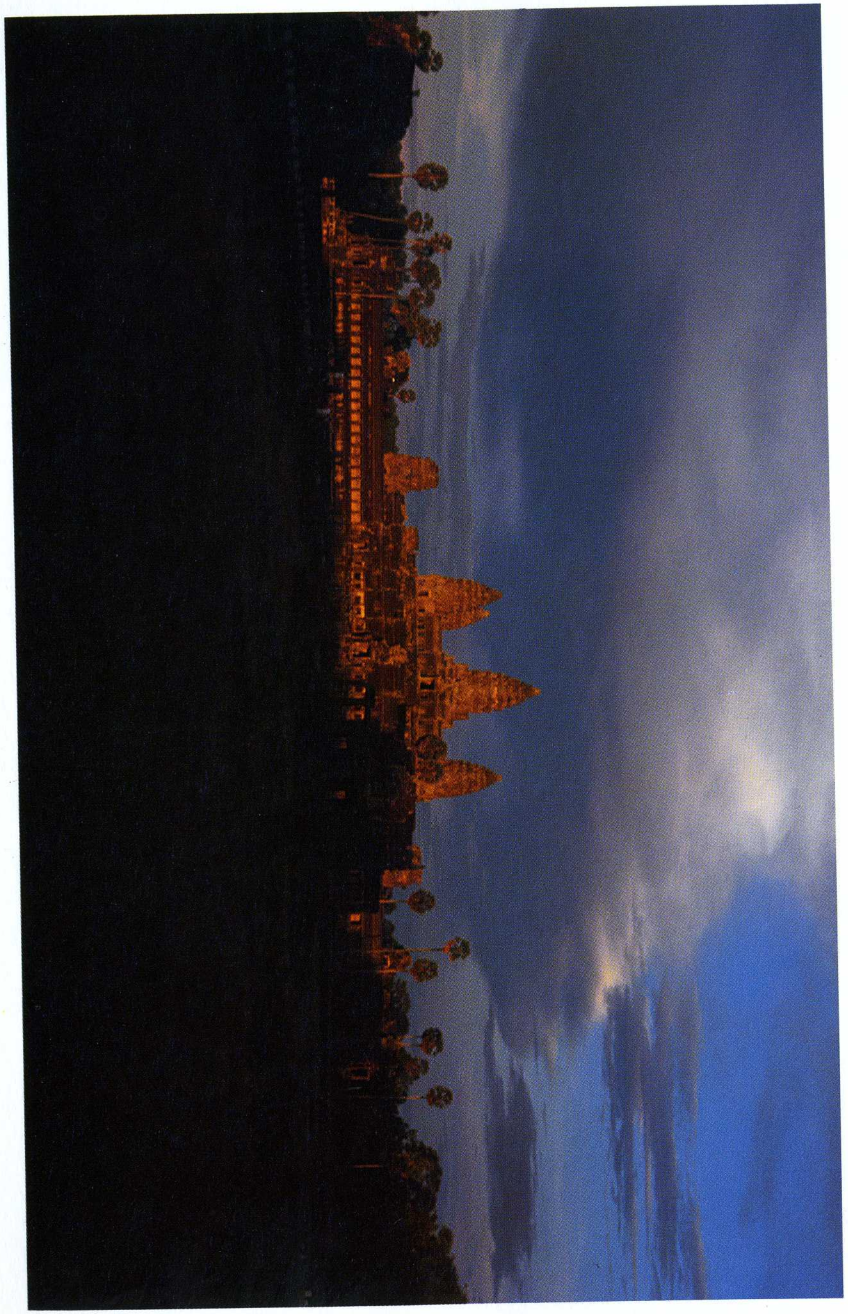
Only the pomegranate, the sugar-cane, the flowers and roots of the lotus, the cannon-ball tree, the banana, and the parsley are identical with those of China. Lichee nuts and oranges look like ours, but are more sour. The other fruits of this country are unknown in China. The trees, too, differ greatly. Here there are more flowering plants, and more in which perfume is united to beauty. Of aquatic plants, also, there are more species, but I do not know their names. Here one looks in vain for peach trees, plum trees, apricots, pines, cypresses, junipers, pears, jujube trees, poplars, willows, cinnamon trees, orchids, and chrysanthemums. In this country, the lotus comes in flower with the first Chinese moon.

Birds

Peafowl, kingfishers, and parrots are among the Cambodian birds which do not exist in China. Like us, however, they have vultures, crows, egrets, sparrows, cormorants, storks, cranes, wild ducks, canaries, et cetera, but they do not have magpies, wild geese, orioles, goat-suckers, swallows, and pigeons.



The ruins of the Bayon (a building with 42 towers)



Sunset at Angkor Wat

Animals

Among quadrupeds, the rhinoceros, the elephant, the wild buffalo, and the "mountain horse" are not found in China. Here there is a great abundance of tigers, panthers, bears, wild boars, stags, gibbons, foxes, et cetera. Lacking are the lion and the camel. Needless to say, one finds here fowl, ducks, cattle, horses, swine, and sheep. The horses are very small. Cattle abound. The peasants use oxen for draught animals and ride them, but when they are dead they dare not eat or flay them, but wait until they have decayed, because these animals have used themselves up in the service of man. Formerly there were no geese, but sailors, bringing them in from China, have established them here. Rats are to be seen as large as cats, and also a sort of rat with a head exactly like that of a young puppy.

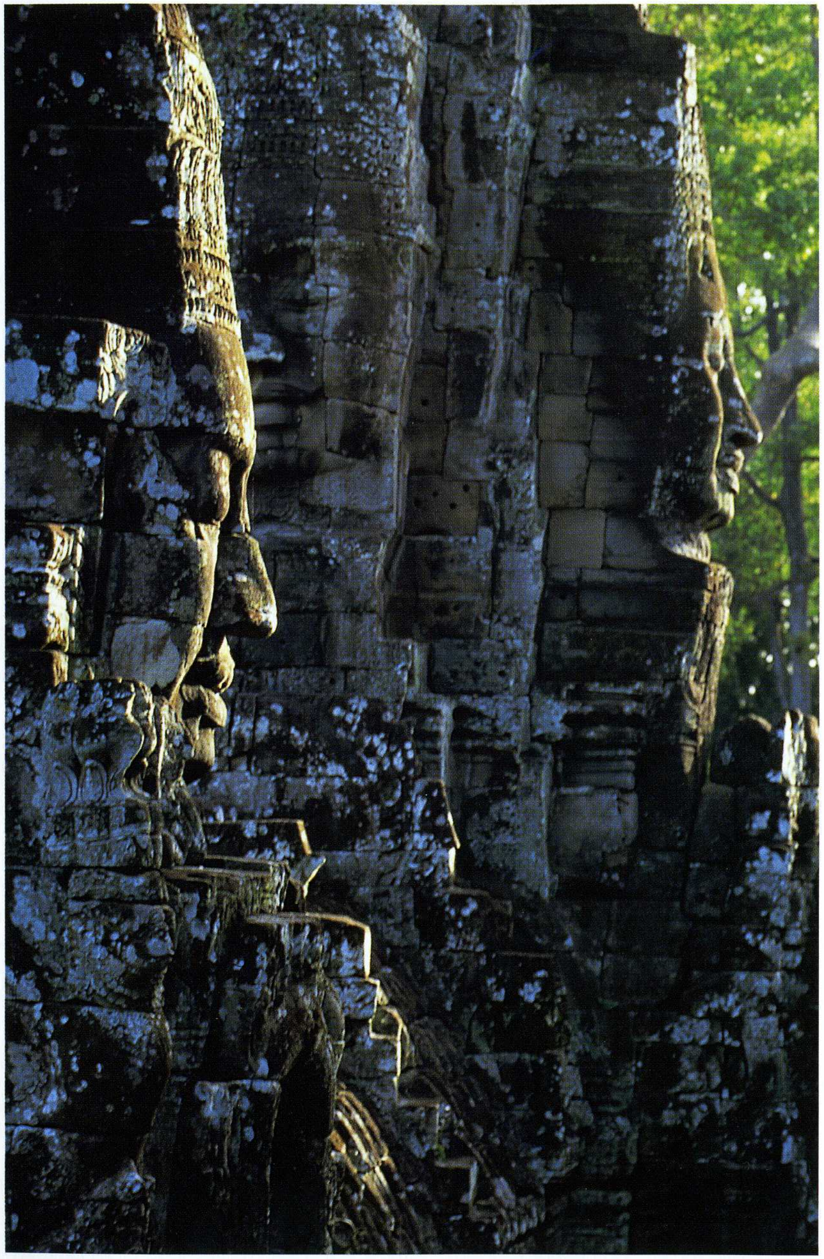
Vegetables

In the way of vegetables they have here onions, mustard, leeks, eggplants, watermelons, squash, cucumbers, and gumbo. They lack beets, lettuce, spinach, and chicory. Cucumbers and eggplants are ripe from the first moon. The roots of eggplants live on for several years. Tree cotton grows higher than the houses, often needing no replacement for ten years. There are many other vegetables whose names I do not know, including those that grow in water.

Apsara (Angkor Wat)

Fish and Reptiles

Of all the fish, the black carp is the most abundant; next in number come the ordinary carp, the bastard carp, the tench, and fresh-water congers. There are also gudgeons, which when mature weigh two pounds or more. Other varieties of fish are found, whose names were strange to me. All these fish that I have mentioned come from the Great Lake. As for the sea fish, every kind is to be found, as well as eels. The natives do not eat the frogs, though these swarm over the roads at night. Sea turtles abound, and alligators as large as a *ho-chu*. Even turtles of six *tsang* (?) are considered fit for food. The prawns of Ch'a-nan weigh as much as a pound apiece. Flippers of tortoises from Chen-p'u are eight or nine inches long. Crocodiles there are, large as boats, which have four feet and are exactly like dragons, with no horns however. Their belly is delicious to eat. In the Great Lake it is possible to fish out by hand bivalves and gasteropods. Crabs are not to be seen; I think they exist, but people do not eat them.



Faces at the Bayon

Fermented Drinks

Cambodians have four kinds of wine, the first of which is called "honey wine" by the Chinese, and is prepared by mixing honey and water in equal parts and starting fermentation by means of a drug. The next category is called *p'ang-ya-ssu* by the natives and is obtained from the leaves of a tree. A third category of wine is made from uncooked rice, or from left-overs of cooked rice, and is called *pao-leng-kio* (Khmer, *ranko*) which means "rice." Last in importance comes a wine made from sugar. It should be added that as one goes deeper into the estuary one finds a shrub growing along the bank called *chiao,* from the juice of which wine may be made by fermentation.

Dancers

Salt, Vinegar and Soy

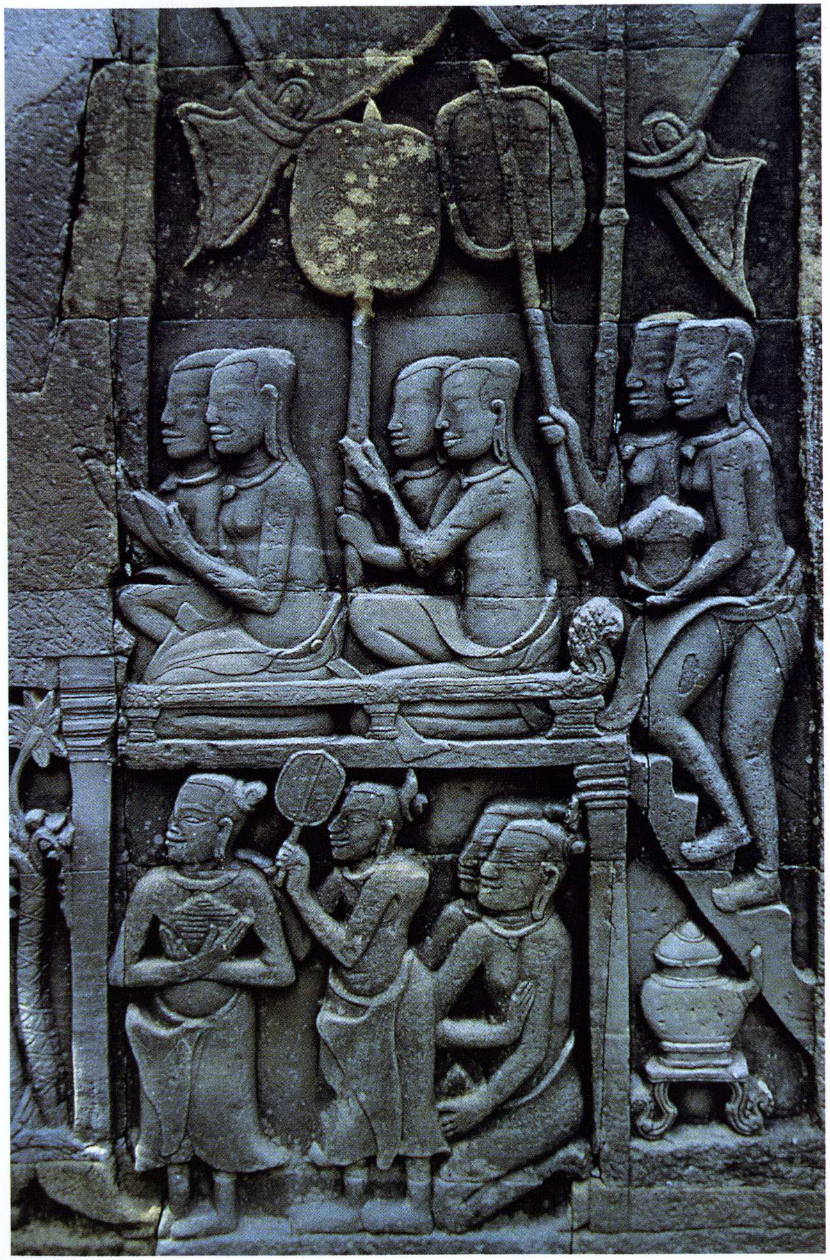
In this country the manufacture of salt is subject to no restrictions. All along the coast, from Chen-p'u to Pa-chien, salt is obtained by boiling sea water. In the mountains, too, there is a mineral with a taste far superior to that of salt, which can be carved out and made into various shapes. The natives have no knowledge of vinegar : if they wish to make a sauce acid, they add to it leaves from the *hsien-p'ing* tree (Khmer, *ampil?*). If this tree is in bud, they use the buds; if it has gone to seed, they use the seeds. Lacking barley and beans they do not know how to prepare soy sauce. They make no yeast from grain. When wine is made from honey and the leaves of trees, they make use of a wine-mother resembling the white wine-mother of our own villages.

Silkworms and the Mulberry Tree

The Cambodians are not given to raising silkworms or to cultivating the mulberry tree, and their women are entirely ignorant of sewing, dress-making, and mending. They are barely able to weave fabrics with the produce of the tree cotton, nor do they know how to spin with a wheel; thread they make with their hand spindles. Looms are unknown to them, and they are satisfied to fasten one end of the warp to their belts and work from the other end. For shuttles they are forced to use pieces of bamboo. Recently much attention has been given by Siamese settlers in this country to raising silkworms and cultivating mulberries; their mulberry seed and silkworm stock all come from Siam. Grass-cloth, which they do not know, finds an equivalent in *lo-ma*. The Siamese use silk to weave the dark damask-like textiles with which they clothe themselves. The Siamese women can sew and mend, and when the fabrics worn by the Cambodians become torn, Siamese are called in to repair the damage.

Utensils

Men of the people own their houses, but possess no tables, benches, basins, or buckets. An earthenware pot serves to cook the rice, and sometimes an earthenware stove for making sauce. Three stones are buried to form a hearth; ladles are made from coconuts. For serving rice, they make use of pottery dishes from China, or copperware. To hold sauce they fashion leaves into little cups which, even when filled with liquid, let nothing escape. *Chiao* leaves are also used to make little spoons for carrying liquids to the mouth; these they throw away when the meal is finished. It is much the same when they are making sacrifice to the spirits, or to the Buddha. They also keep beside them a bowl of tin or earthenware filled with water for rinsing the hands, since only their fingers are used in eating rice, which is sticky and could not be got rid of without this water. Wine is drunk from metal goblets, but poor people content themselves with earthenware cups. Every person dining in the houses of nobles or rich folk is given silver plates, and sometimes even gold ones. At royal banquets a great number of gold utensils are used, fashioned in a very special manner. Mats from Ming-chou are laid on the ground, and in some houses skins of tigers, panthers, deer, and so forth, are laid down, as well as rattan mats. Recently low tables have been introduced, about one foot high. For sleeping only bamboo mats are used, laid on the wooden floors. Of late certain families have adopted the use of low beds, which for the most part are made by the Chinese. Food is protected by cloths, and in the King's palace use is made of double-woven silks spangled with gold, all of which are gifts of foreign merchants. To hull the rice the Cambodians do not employ grindstones, contenting themselves with bruising it with a mortar and pestle.



Ceremonial occasion

Chariots and Palanquins

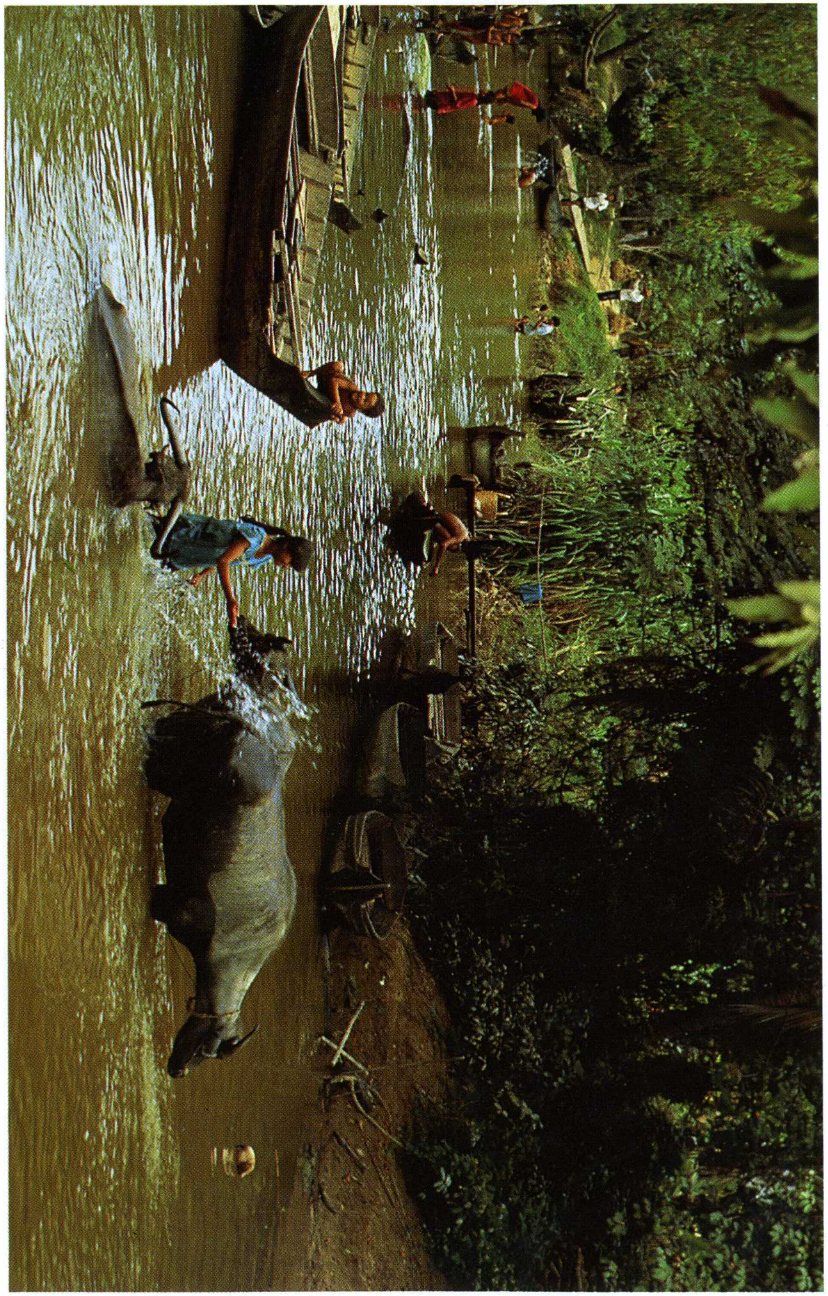
Palanquins are made from one piece of wood, curved in the middle, with the two ends rising vertically, and carved with flowery motifs plated with gold or silver. At the distance of one foot from each end a hook is fastened and to these hooks a large piece of material, folded loosely, is attached with cords. The passenger sinks into this litter and two men bear him away. A palanquin is followed by an object resembling the sail of a ship, but wider, which is made of parti-colored silks. This is carried by four men who follow the palanquin at a run. For long trips travellers often ride elephants or horses; others use carts identical with those in other countries. The horses are ridden bareback, and elephants have no howdahs.

Boats and Oars

Boats of large size are fashioned from boards cut out of hardwood trees. No saws are provided to the workmen, who must hew out the boards with adzes, incurring thus a great waste of wood and labour. Whenever use is made of wood, it must needs be cut out and shaped with chisels. This applies equally to the building of houses. In the case of large boats, use is made of iron nails and the hull is covered with *chiao* (Khmer, *kajang*) leaves, held in place with strips of areca wood. A boat of this style is called *hsin-na* and is propelled by oars. The grease with which it is coated is made from fish and blended with a mineral lime. Smaller boats are made from the trunk of a great tree, chiselled out like a trough; the wood is softened by fire and widened by driving in pieces of wood, as the result of which these boats are broad in the center and slender at the two ends. These boats, which can carry a number of passengers, have no sails; they are propelled only by oars. The name of these is *p'i-lan*.

The Provinces

Cambodia is divided into more than ninety provinces: Chen-p'u, Ch'a-nan, Pa-chien, Mo-yang, Pa-hsieh, P'u-mai, Chih-kun, Mu-tsin-po, Lai-kan-k'eng, Pa-ssu-li. The names of the others I am unable to remember. Each province has its mandarins and in each one is a citadel fortified with wooden palisades.



The Villages

Each village has its temple, or at least a pagoda. No matter how small the village may be, it has a local mandarin, called the *mai-chieh*. Along the highways there are resting places like our post halts; these are called *sen-mu (Khmer, samnak*). Only recently, during the war with Siam, whole villages have been laid waste.

Collecting the Gall

In times gone by, during the eighth Chinese moon, collection of gall took place : the King of Champa annually exacted a large jar filled with thousands and thousands of human gall bladders. In dead of night men were stationed here and there in the more frequented parts of cities and villages. When they met people walking by night they threw over their heads a hood gathered together by a cord and with a small knife removed the gall bladder low down on the right side. When the necessary number had been obtained, they were offered to the King of Champa. No gall was taken from the Chinese, however, for one year the bladder had been removed from a Chinese and placed with the others, whereupon all the gall bladders in the jar putrified and could not be used. Only recently this practice of gathering gall was abandoned and the mandarins and their subordinates who were charged with it were segregated within the city near the North Gate.

A Prodigy

Within the Walled City, near the East Gate, a Cambodian man committed fornication with his younger sister. Their skin and their flesh were fused beyond the power of separating them. After three days passed without food, both parties died. My compatriot Mr. Hsieh, who spent thirty-five years in this country, declares he has known this to happen twice. If such be the case, it shows how well the Cambodians are policed by the supernatural power of their holy Buddha.

Bathing in Cambodia

Bathing in Cambodia

Cambodia is an excessively hot country and it is impossible to get through the day without bathing several times. Even at night one or two baths are imperative. There are no bath houses, no basins, no pails; every family, however, has a pond – or, at times, several families own one in common. Men and women go naked into this pond; but when parents, or elderly persons are bathing the young folk stay out. Conversely, when these latter are in the pond, their elders await their turn. If all the bathers are of the same age, they ignore ceremony; the women hide their sex with the left hand as they enter the water. As simple as that!

Every few days the women of the town, in groups of three or five, stroll down to the river to bathe. Here, at the water's edge, they drop the strip of cotton that clothes them, joining thousands of other women in the river. Even the women of noble birth mingle in these baths and think nothing of it, although they show themselves from head to foot to any bystanders who may appear. Not a day passes without this happening. On days of leisure the Chinese often treat themselves to the spectacle. In fact, I have heard it said that many of them enter the water to take advantage of whatever opportunity offers. The water is always as hot as though on a stove: not until the fifth watch does it cool off a bit before the rising sun brings back the heat.

Immigrants

Chinese sailors coming to the country note with pleasure that it is not necessary to wear clothes, and, since rice is easily had, women easily persuaded, houses easily run, furniture easily come by, and trade easily carried on, a great many sailors desert to take up permanent residence.

Into battle

The Army

Soldiers also move about unclothed and barefoot. In the right hand is carried a lance, in the left a shield. They have no bows, no arrows, no slings, no missiles, no breastplates, no helmets. I have heard it said that in war with the Siamese universal military service was required. Generally speaking, these people have neither discipline nor strategy.

The Sovereign Comes Forth

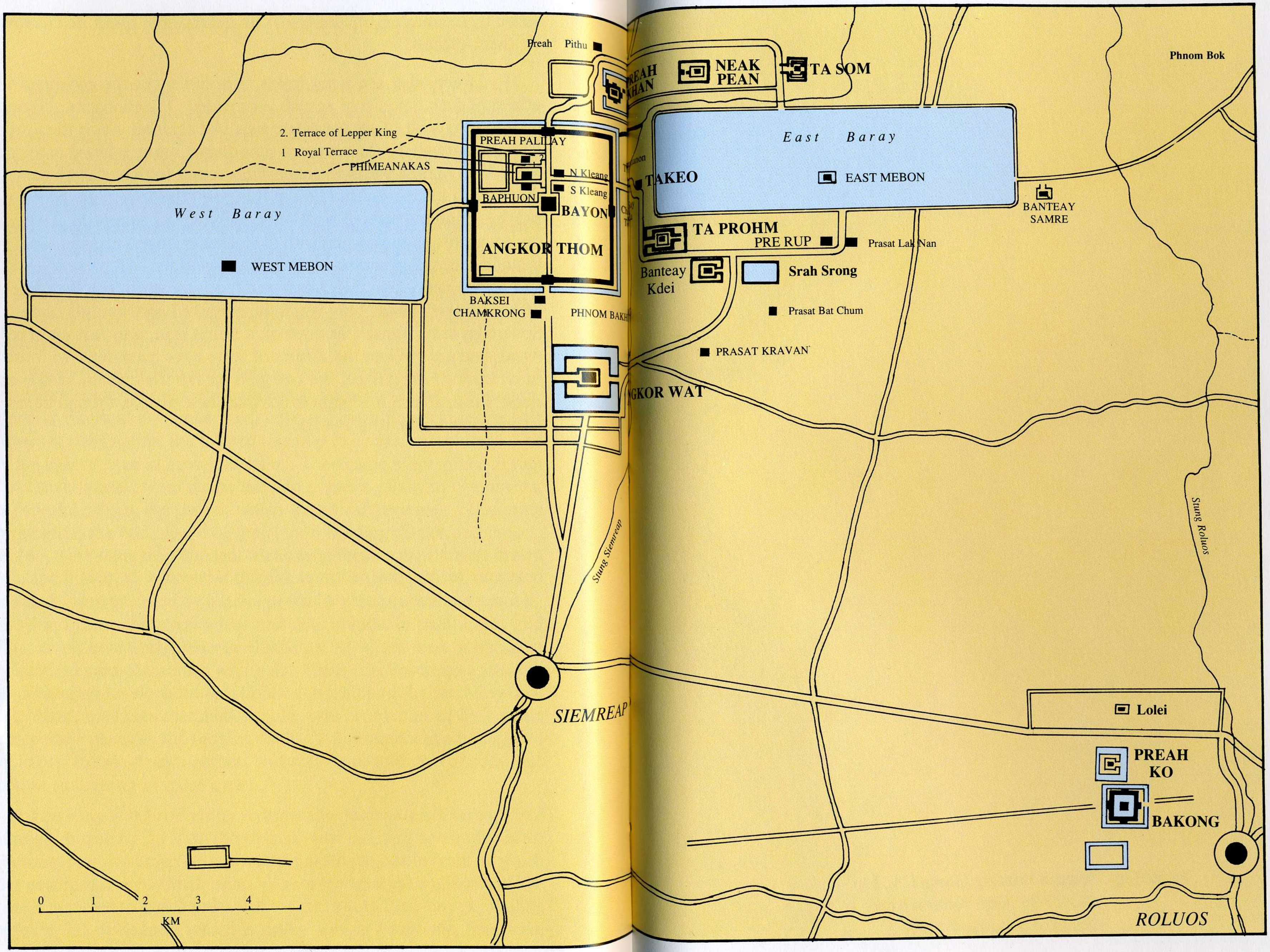
I have heard it said that in previous reigns the marks of the King's chariot wheels were never seen outside the palace gates – a precaution against unforeseen violence. The present ruler is the son-in-law of his predecessor, who, devoted as he was to his daughter, gave her the chance to steal the golden sword (of office) and give it to her husband, thus depriving her brother of the succession. This brother strove to stir the soldiery to revolt, but the prince, hearing of this, cut off his brother-in-law's toes and threw him into a dark dungeon. He then caused a splinter of sacred iron to be grafted into his own body, so that any thrust of knife or spear could do him no harm. Once this was brought about, the new King ventured forth. During my stay of over a year in the country I saw him emerge four or five times.

When the King leaves his palace, the procession is headed by the soldiery; then come the flags, the banners, the music. Girls of the palace, three or five hundred in number, gaily dressed, with flowers in their hair and tapers in their hands, are massed together in a separate column. The tapers are lighted even in broad daylight. Then came other girls carrying gold and silver vessels from the palace and a whole galaxy of ornaments, of very special design, the uses of which were strange to me. Then came still more girls, the bodyguard of the palace, holding shields and lances. These, too, were separately aligned. Following them came chariots drawn by goats and horses, all adorned with gold, ministers and princes, mounted on elephants, were preceded by bearers of scarlet parasols, without number. Close behind came the royal wives and concubines, in palanquins and chariots, or mounted on horses or elephants, to whom were assigned at least a hundred parasols mottled with gold. Finally the Sovereign appeared, standing erect on an elephant and holding in his hand the sacred sword. This elephant, his tusks sheathed in gold, was accompanied by bearers of twenty white parasols with golden shafts. All around was a bodyguard of elephants, drawn close together, and still more soldiers for complete protection, marching in close order.

The King was proceeding to a nearby destination where golden palanquins, borne by girls of the palace, were waiting to receive him. For the most part, his objective was a little golden pagoda in front of which stood a golden statue of the Buddha. Those who caught a glimpse of the King were expected to kneel and touch the earth with their brows. Failing to perform this obeisance, which is called *sun-pa (sambah)*, they were

seized by the masters of ceremonies (marshals) who under no circumstance let them escape.

Every day the King holds two audiences for consideration of affairs of state. No list of agenda is provided. Functionaries and ordinary people who wish to see the Sovereign seat themselves on the ground to await his arrival. In the course of time distant music is heard in the palace, while from outside blasts on conch-shells sound forth as though to welcome the ruler. I have been told that at this point the Sovereign, coming from nearby, contents himself with only one golden palanquin. Two girls of the palace lift up the curtain with their slender fingers and the King, sword in hand, appears standing in the golden window. All present – ministers and commoners – join their hands and touch the earth with their foreheads, lifting up their heads only when the sound of conches has ceased. The Sovereign seats himself at once on a lion's skin, which is an hereditary royal treasure. When the affairs of state have been dealt with the King turns back to the palace, the two girls let fall the curtain, and everyone rises. From all this it is plain to see that these people, though barbarians, know what is due to a Prince.



Preah Pithu
NEAK PEAN
TA SOM
Phnom Bok
2. Terrace of Lepper King
1 Royal Terrace
PHIMEANAKAS
PREAH PALILAY
N Kleang
S Kleang
BAPHUON
BAYON
ANGKOR THOM
TAKEO
East Baray
EAST MEBON
BANTEAY SAMRE
West Baray
WEST MEBON
TA PROHM
PRE RUP
Prasat Lak Nan
Banteay Kdei
Srah Srong
BAKSEI CHAMKRONG
PHNOM BAKH
Prasat Bat Chum
PRASAT KRAVAN
GKOR WAT
Stung Siemreap
Stung Roluos
SIEMREAP
Lolei
PREAH KO
BAKONG
ROLUOS
0 1 2 3 4
KM